

## WARNING NOTICE - SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF  
SOVIET DEFENSE DECISIONMAKING, 1953-1964 (U)

Part One: 1953-1959 (U)

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I. THE SOVIET UNION'S STRATEGIC POSITION AT STALIN'S DEATH

There could not have been many Soviet citizens whom Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, did not profoundly move. The memoirs and oral recollections of those who had been his victims and his worshippers alike (and of some who had been both) attest uniformly to the apprehension that filled the land at the news that "the heart of...the wise leader and teacher of the communist party and the Soviet people...has stopped beating."\* "At the time," Khrushchev recalled years later, "his death seemed like a terrible tragedy; but I feared that the worst was still to come."\*\* The nature of the anxiety so widely experienced varied from group to group and from individual to individual, but the perception that the Soviet Union was about to take a leap into the unknown was pervasive. The new leadership's heavy anxiety was bluntly articulated in its first communique to the Soviet people which spoke about the need for "prevention of any kind of disorder and panic."\*\*\* Fearing a spontaneous eruption from below that might engulf them all, Stalin's heirs had at the same time to be on guard against each other. The habitual mode of deadly political warfare that was Stalin's legacy placed each of his surviving lieutenants at risk in an environment suddenly so fluid and unstable that mutual fears of preemptive attack from within the new ruling oligarchy competed and interacted with corporate fears of attack from without that might destroy them all.

Fear of outside forces was not confined to the Soviet people, who, in the end, remained as passive to the fierce internal struggle of the oligarchs as they had been in the face of Stalin's periodic assaults upon both party and society earlier. The same communique that raised the spectre of "disorder and panic" at home betrayed the leadership's anxiety about the Soviet Union's vulnerability to enemies abroad in the moment of national shock and disarray.

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\**Pravda*, March 6, 1953.

\*\* Khrushchev, I, p. 322.

\*\*\**Pravda*, March 7, 1953.

"Right up until his death," Khrushchev recalls, "Stalin used to tell us, 'You'll see, when I'm gone the imperialist powers will wring your necks like chickens.'"<sup>\*</sup> Who among his successors could be sure that Stalin had not been right? While Khrushchev and his other intimates knew Stalin's weaknesses and limitations, they all seemed awed by his mystique, or was it his incredible and perhaps unique good luck? For Stalin had navigated the Soviet Union successfully for a quarter of a century over an enormously perilous course in the face of overwhelmingly more powerful enemies who seemed bent on destroying the USSR. He had experienced everything and survived it all. Under his leadership the Soviet Union had risen from the ruins of World War II to become the world's second most powerful state, master of a sprawling East European empire and head of a bloc of Communist-ruled states that embraced one-third of mankind.

Through a combination of guile and ruthless repression, Stalin had managed to secure the USSR's hold on almost every square mile of Europe that had been reached by the Red Army in 1945. Defying his erstwhile Western allies who insisted that the peoples of Eastern Europe be permitted to elect governments of their own choosing (certain in Stalin's view to be non-Communist, if not anti-Soviet), he had installed puppet "people's democratic" regimes and then proceeded brutally to Sovietize and satellize them. Though the Chinese Communist victory four years after the great war owed little to Stalin, the Communist leadership of the new China pledged its loyalty to him and to the Soviet Union and appeared to the rest of the world as a huge and potentially powerful anchor of monolithic Communism in Asia. Undeterred by the U.S. nuclear monopoly from provoking American hostility in the early post-war years, Stalin, with his customary sang-froid, pretended that the atomic bomb was merely a terror weapon useful only for intimidating the faint of heart. Stalin behaved as if he believed that what counted was the lopsided conventional military balance in Europe, which he purchased

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\*Khrushchev, II. p. 392.

by fielding the largest peacetime army in history, a large part of it deployed in forward positions in Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, under a heavy cloak of secrecy that isolated the USSR as never before from the rest of the world, he mobilized the Soviet Union's scientific, technological, and industrial resources in extensive and urgent programs to overcome the Soviet Union's lag in modern weaponry, succeeding in 1949 in detonating a nuclear device years in advance of Western expectations. That his lieutenants knew, according to Khrushchev, that Stalin privately "trembled with fear" in the face of American nuclear weaponry\* (the American stockpile exceeded weapons in the year Stalin died),\*\* could only deepen their anxiety about what was in store for them now that Stalin was no longer at the helm.

While Stalin's achievements in building the power and international stature of the Soviet Union were undeniable, the external dangers confronting his successors were in large part the unintended consequence of the gains that had been won. Stalin's consolidation of Soviet control in Eastern Europe, in violation of what his former allies believed to have been wartime Soviet commitments, had driven the Western Europeans into a defensive military alliance with the United States, which did not, as Stalin may have anticipated in 1945, withdraw back into traditional isolationism in the early post-war years. Soviet control over Eastern Europe had been imposed by a regime so severe and distinctively Stalinist that its perpetuation in Stalin's absence was hardly certain. Early Soviet development of atomic weapons heightened the West's sense of peril from the USSR. Thus, while his immensely superior opponent was rapidly increasing its nuclear stockpile and acquiring a large new generation of reliable means of long-range aerial delivery, Stalin left the USSR in a transitional period with its unclear stockpile still meagre and an operational capability yet to be achieved.\*\*\*

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\*Khrushchev, II, p. 11.

\*\*K. Vershinin, "Voenno-Vozdushnye Sily," Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal, No. 9, 1967, p. 38.

\*\*\*Soviet sources date the "introduction" of nuclear weapons into the Soviet armed forces from 1953 or 1954. See, for example

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Without Stalin's great personal authority, it was uncertain how responsive Mao Tse-tung, now the most prestigious living Communist leader, would be to the new Soviet collective leadership. At a minimum they could anticipate that a new relationship, almost certainly more costly in terms of Soviet economic and military assistance, would have to be worked out with the Chinese--a relationship more commensurate with the size and prestige of the PRC and the aspirations of its leaders. And while the world Communist movement remained an important Soviet asset, its great early post-war promise had been largely dissipated by Stalin's erratic vacillation between bursts of unwarranted revolutionary optimism and, more characteristically, pessimistic disdain of the potentialities and interests of Communist parties in countries that could not be reached by the Soviet Army.

These negative tendencies and growing sources of danger had all been evident in the last four or five years of Stalin's rule, but had been exacerbated by the means Stalin chose to cope with them. Khruschev's memoirs and the subsequent international behavior of Stalin's successors make clear that they regarded Stalin's efforts to reverse these tendencies and to eliminate the sources of danger as failures.

Stalin had insisted that Eastern Europe be governed by satraps rather than by local Communist leaders who commanded indigenous sources of personal authority. In Yugoslavia this policy produced a confrontation with Tito, whose basic loyalty to the Soviet Union and to Stalin personally had never been in serious question, but whose determination to rule his country with dignity and to exercise some measure of the autonomy he enjoyed by virtue of Communism's grass roots victory rankled Stalin and made him fearful of a contagious precedent. Stalin's monumental misjudgment of his opponent ("I will shake my little finger, and there will be no more Tito")\* had cost the USSR dearly, converting one of its most populous and strategically located allies into an enemy, discrediting the theory of "new" foreign relations among socialist states, and creating, through Tito's successful resistance, the very precedent in reality that Stalin had feared in fantasy.

\*Khrushchev, I. p. 600.

close once it was clear that its original objectives could not be achieved left them with a troublesome legacy which they moved quickly to liquidate.

DID THEY FEAR WAR?

Contrary to his last major pronouncement (1952) that war between the imperialist states was more probable than an imperialist war against the Soviet Union, Stalin, according to Khrushchev, lived the last years of his life in dread fear of a U.S. attack. "In a word, Stalin trembled with fear. He ordered that the whole country be put on military alert... We remained in a state of constant alert right up to the time Stalin died and afterwards as well."\* Particularly after the American intervention in Korea, Khrushchev, who had returned to Moscow in 1949, recalls that Stalin believed a "pre-war" (*predvoenaya*) situation had arisen and that "war was possible, even inevitable."\*\*

In this, as in many other "recollections" Khrushchev's account is self-serving: he may have deliberately exaggerated Stalin's fear of war in order to dramatize the difficult situation confronting Stalin's successors and hence also the magnitude of his own success in improving it. At one point in his rambling reminiscences, Khrushchev suggests that Stalin may in fact have overestimated the strength and exaggerated the hostile intentions of his foes, \*\*\* but he does not make clear whether this was a view at which he arrived subsequently or one that he held while Stalin lived. But however widely the new leaders may have shared the perception of imminent danger of war that Khrushchev attributes to Stalin, their behavior in the first months of their rule suggests that they believed the danger was, at least in part, a function of Stalin's distinctive manner of dealing with it.. By substituting for the bristling belligerency with which he met real or imagined threats from abroad a more conciliatory posture that held out prospects for diplomatic

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\* Khrushchev, II, pp. 11-12.

\*\* Unpublished transcript of Khrushchev tapes.

\*\*\* Unpublished transcript of Khrushchev tapes.

resolution of outstanding issues, they could parry the threat and gain time while they built the Soviet Union's newly acquired nuclear power and concerted policies appropriate for the new situation.

Stalin's successors evinced no great dissatisfaction with the broad directions of Stalinist foreign policy in the first few years after his death. What emerges from their international political behavior is a conviction that Soviet foreign policy had been unnecessarily encumbered and complicated by a tone and style of execution that galvanized rather than paralyzed opponents, thus increasing the magnitude of a threat that was in any case inherent in the confrontation of opposed social systems and national interests. They further concluded that Stalin had gratuitously antagonized the newly emergent states whose neutrality, if not cooperation, in the overarching East-West competition might otherwise be secured. Indeed, by concentrating on a Europe-centered strategy that was of cardinal importance but without promise of near-term victories, Stalin had failed to seize new opportunities for extending the scope and range of Soviet international relations, ignoring opportunities for expanding Soviet power and influence in peripheral areas of the globe at far lower risk than at the line of East-West demarcation in Europe.

#### PEREDYSHKA: BREATHING SPACE

The circumstances under which the new rulers assumed power virtually ruled out radical new departures in foreign or military policy in the short-run. Stalin's successors were in no position to undertake them, even supposing some among them already had clear alternatives in mind. The most basic procedures for governing the country remained to be worked out. Relations among the oligarchs were uncertain and tense. Habituated by decades of service to Stalin to the role of lieutenants, often as pawns employed against each other by Stalin, the new leaders must have found collaboration as peers collectively wielding supreme authority an unfamiliar mode of behavior. In such an environment, personal leadership qualities, kept in check under Stalin's jealous rule, began to count heavily, but not at once.

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The events of the next few years suggest that among the senior leaders there were individuals with new ideas both in foreign and domestic affairs. But during the prolonged succession struggle triggered by Stalin's death, the policy stances of individual leaders more often than not were dictated by personal strategies for power aggrandizement or for resisting the encroachments of others, and aimed less at advancing coherent national policies than at recruiting bureaucratic and institutional constituencies that could be employed in the power struggle.\*

Initially, the area of policy maneuver for the leadership as a whole was confined to shortrun measures designed to defend the corporate interests of the new rulers against immediate domestic and foreign threats that were commonly perceived. At the lowest common denominator there was evidently agreement on the need for breathing space to allow the new leadership to consolidate itself, absorb the shock of Stalin's death, stabilize the country, and tranquilize its enemies, while concerting new policies. The first requirement was to maintain a show of unity among themselves. (How thin was the facade of monolithic solidarity that they threw up would be revealed soon enough.)

A second requirement on which they evidently reached early agreement was the necessity to make some concrete concessions to long-suffering Soviet consumers, particularly in the capital city, now that the awesome enforcer of austerity was in his grave. Pledges to increase the output of food and consumer goods received some quick tangible expression by such measures as the unprecedented early sale of wheat flour in Moscow stores in the spring and substantial price reductions on a wide range of goods in the city's department stores. A reduction in the size of the *de facto* compulsory state loan was quickly announced. An amnesty freeing certain classes of detained common criminals was proclaimed and a press campaign to strengthen "socialist legality" launched, highlighted in April by the repudiation of the "Doctor's Plot," which lifted the threat of a new blood

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\* Reflected most starkly in Khrushchev's own frequent policy shifts between 1953 and 1957.

purge that Stalin had left hanging over the country. And assurances were given to minority nationalities that the national integrity of non-Russian republics would be protected against zealous local Russifiers, some of whom were purged and replaced by indigenous local leaders.

Some of these measures later became matters of controversy in Kremlin politics, as particular leaders attempted to capitalize politically on them by gaining personal credit for popular measures, or, conversely, by associating themselves with interests these measures appeared to threaten. But initially at least it seems clear that there was broad agreement among the oligarchs on some measured expression of their concern to improve the lot of the Soviet people, without at the same time raising potentially dangerous expectations of large or rapid change.\*

Similarly, in the foreign policy field, the new leaders evidently arrived at a quick consensus on the need for a breathing space to be secured by a series of gestures signifying the Soviet Union's interest in a reduction of international tensions. In Washington there was a popular new American administration pledged to replace what its leaders had condemned as the defensive and reactive policy of their predecessors with a vague, still undefined, but ominous-sounding policy of "liberation" or "rollback of Communism." But Stalin's death had also aroused hopes in some Western circles, particularly in Europe, that the truculence and belligerence of Soviet foreign policy might be buried with its author. The early speeches of the new leaders, particularly those of Premier Malenkov, suggest agreement among the new leaders to modify Soviet declaratory policy, introducing a note of willingness to revive efforts to resolve outstanding issues through diplomacy, but without committing

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\* Khrushchev illustrates the dilemma posed by the leadership's early attempts to institute controlled social decompression in the case of the "thaw" in Soviet literature: "We were scared--really scared. We were afraid the thaw might unleash a flood, which we wouldn't be able to control and which could drown us. How could it drown us? It could have overflowed the banks of the Soviet riverbed and formed a tidal wave which would have washed away all the barriers and retaining walls of our society," (Khrushchev, II, pp. 78-79).

the USSR to any irreversible course of action or making substantial concrete concessions. Quick agreement was reached to accelerate the negotiation of Korean armistice. The new leadership's prestige was not so heavily invested, as Stalin's had been, in the prisoner-exchange issue, which remained the principal obstacle to an agreement, and there was no inclination to test the credibility of Eisenhower's private threat to escalate the war, perhaps with nuclear weapons, if an armistice were not quickly concluded.

Lost causes which Stalin had stubbornly refused to abandon were now quickly liquidated, notably outstanding Soviet territorial claims against Turkey. Conciliatory gestures were made toward the Soviet Union's other southern neighbor, Iran, to signify that the new leadership considered the early post-war unpleasantness a closed episode. Diplomatic relations with Israel, severed in connection with "Doctor's Plot" charges against international Zionist machinations, were restored. And while it was too soon for the new leaders to concert a fresh approach toward the central foreign policy issue of the time, the imminent incorporation of West Germany into the Western military alliance system, there was an effort to slow down that process by signalling a new Soviet readiness to negotiate. There was even a hint to the Yugoslavs that the USSR might be willing to call off Stalin's cold war against Tito, but Molotov's deep personal involvement in the Soviet-Yugoslav rift probably precluded any serious move toward early rapprochement.

To the new Soviet leaders, the situation appeared to cry out, as it had many times before in the Party's history, for a *peredyshka*, a pause and regroupment of forces under the protective shield of a reduction in tensions, both at home and abroad.

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II. THE STALIN SUCCESSION AND THE RISE OF KHRUSHCHEV

No matter how urgent the foreign policy and defense issues inherited by the new Soviet leaders may have seemed to them, they were necessarily overshadowed by the more immediate problem of organizing a new government and party leadership and dividing Stalin's powers among themselves. "We had," Khrushchev recalls about the priority of early post-Stalin national security problems, "a plateful of other problems."<sup>\*</sup>

Stalin does not appear to have made any clear provisions for his own succession and was probably incapable psychologically of doing so. A new Stalin-like personal dictator was not a likely alternative: Stalin had not groomed such a successor and had in fact shuffled and manipulated his lieutenants so as to prevent such a figure from emerging as a possible threat to himself. After Zhdanov's death in 1948, Malenkov came closest to meeting the requirements of an heir apparent. Apart from Stalin, he was the only Soviet leader simultaneously holding senior positions in all of the highest organs of party and state: Politburo, Secretariat, and Council of Ministers. His selection by Stalin to deliver the Accountability Report of the Central Committee to the XIX Party Congress in October 1952 appeared to confirm his pre-eminence among Stalin's lieutenants.

But characteristically, while elevating Malenkov, Stalin had brought Khrushchev back to Moscow from the Ukraine in 1949 and added him to the Secretariat, presumably as a counterweight to Malenkov. Moreover, at the XIX Party Congress in October 1952, Stalin instituted a thorough reorganization of the party's executive bodies that reduced the status of all of his senior subordinates. An enlarged Presidium of 25 members was elected, absorbing nine of the 11 members of the old Politburo. The Secretariat was doubled in size to ten members; the five new secretaries were all newly elected full or candidate members of the enlarged Presidium. Stalin was named first in both the

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\* Khrushchev, II, p. 12.

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Presidium and Secretariat lists, but all others were listed alphabetically instead of in rank order as before, which had the effect of eliminating official status distinctions between the new Presidium/Secretariat members and the old, save for Stalin. According to Khrushchev, the reorganization was aimed by Stalin "at the removal of the old Political Bureau members and the bringing in of less experienced persons so that these would extol him in all sorts of ways."<sup>\*</sup>

One old Politburo member, Andreyev, was dropped outright. Kosygin, elected to the Politburo in 1949, was demoted to candidate membership in the new enlarged Presidium. Two others, Molotov and Mikoyan, though elected to the enlarged Presidium, were clearly in deep trouble. According to Khrushchev, Stalin attacked them at a CC plenary session after the XIX Congress and hinted they were guilty of "some baseless charges." Both of these "close comrades-in-arms" of Stalin were excluded from an extra-statutory body, the Bureau of the Presidium, established secretly by Stalin after the XIX Congress, perhaps as a transitional body from which Old Guard members would gradually be removed and replaced by younger members brought in from the enlarged Presidium. While Molotov and Mikoyan were excluded from the Bureau, Pervukhin and Saburov, newly elected members of the enlarged Presidium, were brought in. Another venerable Bolshevik, Voroshilov, whom Stalin virtually ostracized from his circle toward the end of his rule, also appeared to be on his way out; Stalin, again according to Khrushchev, even "toyed with the absurd and ridiculous charge that Voroshilov was an English agent."<sup>\*</sup> Finally, Beria, while remaining along with Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Bulganin a member of Stalin's most intimate social circle until the very end, was apparently being set up as the principal target of "Doctor's Plot," a case fabricated on Stalin's instructions early in 1953 by the Ministry of State Security.

If Stalin had planned to purge some of his senior lieutenants and to downgrade the influence of the Old Guard as a whole, his intentions

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<sup>\*</sup>Khrushchev, I, p. 615.

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were thwarted overnight after his death by his successors: the XIX Congress reorganization was immediately cancelled out, the enlarged Presidium disbanded, and a new small Presidium was elected, consisting essentially of members of the Secret Bureau of the (enlarged) Presidium, to which the formerly excluded members of the Old Guard, Molotov and Mikoyan, were returned.\*

Khrushchev's memoirs provide a revealing account of the mechanics of transition during the five days it took Stalin to die after his fatal stroke on March 1.\*\* That Malenkov was the major domo in Stalin's last court is clear: it was he whom the Chekhist guards at Stalin's dacha first called to notify that the dictator had been found unconscious on the floor of his bedroom by his housekeeper. Malenkov, in turn, phoned Beria, Khrushchev, and Bulganin, Stalin's closest intimates in the final months of his rule, and his dinner companions the evening before. Apprised of the seriousness of Stalin's illness, the four brought in Kaganovich and Voroshilov to join them in an around-the-clock, three-shift vigil at Stalin's bedside. (Molotov and Mikoyan, the remaining members of the Old Guard, but lately banished from Stalin's court, were not invited to participate in the death watch.) The pairings were also noteworthy: Malenkov-Beria; Khrushchev-Bulganin; Voroshilov-Kaganovich.

Stalin's death having been duly certified by a large team of attending physicians, a meeting of "the Bureau and the Presidium"--an interesting, but technically redundant distinction since the larger statutory body included all the members of the smaller extra-statutory group--was called to choose a new leadership. Their decision was published the following day (March 7) as a decision of the Party Central Committee, the Council of Ministers, and the Supreme Soviet Presidium. If Khrushchev's version is correct, it means that Stalin's "young guard" voted themselves out of office and, in order "to ensure more operative leadership," joined in the unanimous election of a new ten-member Presidium to succeed the larger body elected after the XIX Congress.

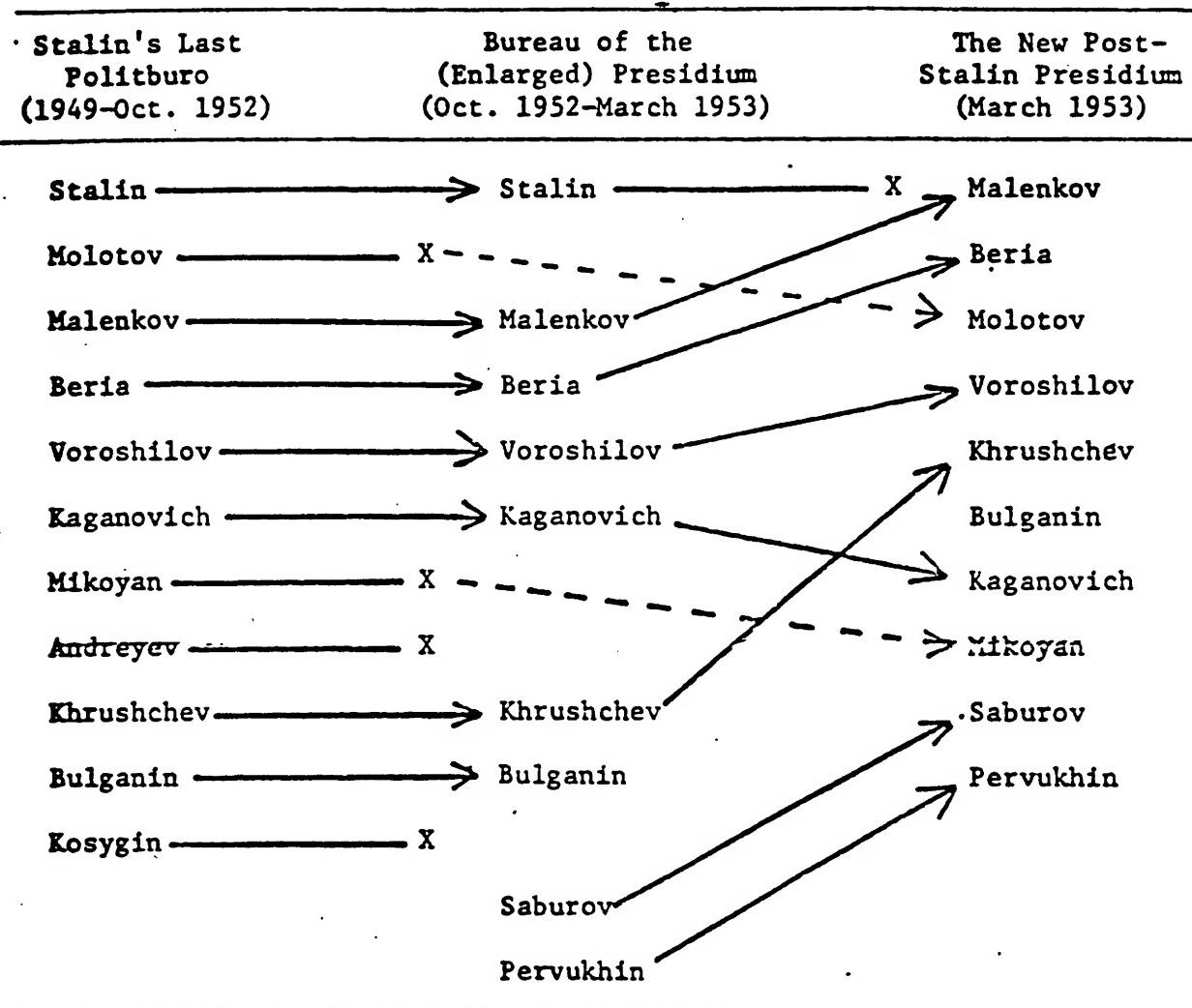
\* See table, next page.

\*\* See Khrushchev, I, pp. 316-325.

\*\*\* Almost without exception, however, the demoted members and candidate members of the enlarged Presidium were assigned to leading

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Khrushchev's belief that Malenkov and Beria had worked out the basic decisions in advance seemed to be confirmed by the proceedings. Beria nominated Malenkov to succeed Stalin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. (This was the first appointment listed in the published decision.) Malenkov nominated Beria as First Deputy Chairman and proposed that the Ministry of Interior (MVD) and Ministry of State Security (MGB) be merged with Beria as minister. Molotov, ranked third in the new Presidium, was also appointed a First Deputy Chairman and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was returned to his control. Mikoyan was named head of an amalgamated Ministry of Internal and External Trade, but appointed only a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, and thus excluded from its Presidium, which consisted of the chairman and his first deputies only. Other first deputies appointed were Bulganin, who was named to head a reunified Ministry of Defense, superceding the former Ministries of War and Navy; and Kaganovich, who received no ministerial portfolio, but was evidently made overlord of a complex of transportation and heavy industry ministries. Saburov and Pervukhin, who, according to Khrushchev, had been members of Stalin's Bureau of the Presidium, were retained in the new party Presidium and given ministerial rank in the government, but were appointed neither first nor ordinary deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers, and thus, like Mikoyan, they were excluded from its Presidium. Voroshilov was given the largely honorific post of Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, titular president of the Soviet Union. In its broad features, this was a reversion to the pre-1949 situation when major ministerial posts were in the hands of senior Politburo members.\*

Only one member of the new Presidium was not appointed to a high government position: Khrushchev. He was, in the words of the decision,

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government and party positions. Six of them were subsequently elected to the full Presidium. Among the six were Leonid Brezhnev and Aleksei Kosygin.

\* See Tables I, II, III in the Appendix for a listing of members of executive bodies of the Party and government throughout the period.

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"to concentrate on work in the Central Committee of the CPSU" (i.e., its Secretariat) and for that purpose was relieved of his duties as First Secretary of the Moscow Party Committee. But while a special position in the Secretariat for Khrushchev was implied by the decision, its significance was initially obscured by the fact that Malenkov, the top-ranking member of the Party Presidium, apparently remained a member of the Secretariat, though he had not been awarded Stalin's old title, "General Secretary," which may in fact have lapsed after the XIX Party Congress.

The composition of the central Secretariat, the party organ through which Stalin in the 1920s had gained control over the Party's administrative apparatus and through it of the Central Committee and ultimately of the Politburo, was evidently a contentious issue among the new leaders during the first week after Stalin's death. There was no full listing of CC Secretaries in the initial joint decision. Three new Secretaries were added (Ignatiev, Pospelov, Shatalin). Of the nine surviving members of Stalin's last Secretariat, four were released (Pegov, Ponomarenko, Ignatov, and Brezhnev). Presumably the other five Secretaries elected in 1952--Malenkov, Khrushchev, Suslov, Mikhailov and Aristov--retained their offices, but only Khrushchev and Mikhailov were explicitly identified as Secretaries. Malenkov, *primus inter pares* in the Party Presidium and head of the Soviet Government, appeared also to be senior Secretary.

This combination of powerful offices in Malenkov's hands was evidently perceived by his Presidium colleagues as intolerably threatening and on March 14 a plenary session of the Central Committee "grant[ed] the request of Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Comrade G. M. Malenkov to be released from the duties of Secretary of the Party Central Committee." At the same time, a pared-down five-member slate of Secretaries was elected, with Khrushchev ranked first.\* Khrushchev was now the sole member of the Party Presidium on the Secretariat. (Later in September,

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\* Several weeks later, after the repudiation of the "Doctor's Plot," one of the Secretaries, S. D. Ignatiev, Stalin's last Minister of State Security, was implicated in the fabrication of the case and released from the Secretariat.

1953, Khrushchev's senior position in the Secretariat was formalized by the new title, "First Secretary of the Central Committee," a designation previously applied only to senior secretaries of party committees below the level of the CPSU Central Committee.) The stage was now set for a power struggle between the two men who headed the central agencies of Soviet rule, the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee Secretariat. But first they combined forces to deal with a more immediate threat that imperiled them both.

#### PURGE OF BERIA

For a group of successors who shared a common experience of terror under Stalin's capricious and vengeful leadership, and which included several men rescued by Stalin's death from the threat of imminent purge and physical extinction, an arrangement securing them against such a fate was inevitably the highest order of business. While mutual vows of non-aggression were almost certainly exchanged among the successors, to be enforced by rigorous adherence to "collectivity of leadership," Beria, by virtue of his control over the newly combined Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of State Security and his command over armed units in the capitol, remained an essentially uncontrollable threat.

In Khrushchev's account, he himself took the lead in conspiring with his colleagues to take preventive action against Beria before the latter could spring a trap against his colleagues.\* According to Khrushchev, the potential threat posed by Beria was widely recognized by other members of the Presidium, but they were deterred by fear of failure from concerting efforts to remove him. Each seemed to require assurance that all the others would act. The key figure was obviously Malenkov. So long as his partnership with Beria remained viable, his leading position in the new regime seemed assured. Yet he would be the first logical target of any coup by Beria.

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\* See Khrushchev, I., pp. 321-341.

Precisely what specific moves by Beria, if any, led the others to screw up their courage and confront him, is unclear. His behavior provided grounds for suspicion that he was attempting to broaden the base of his support, but there is no firm evidence that he was preparing a coup. Stalin's chief purger since 1938, Beria after the dictator's death had taken the lead in public pledges "to strengthen socialist legality" and it was his Ministry that denounced the "Doctor's Plot" as a fabrication. A late Stalin purge of the Georgian party organization, which had toppled some of Beria's close associates in Tbilisi, was likewise repudiated. An extensive purge of the MVD at the union-republic level was carried out, with the former incumbents presumably replaced by men of Beria's choice. Beria also appeared to be building up support among local leaders in the national republics, promoting a policy of replacing Russian party secretaries with members of the indigenous nationality group in the Ukraine and the Baltic republics. As if to erase his ominous image as head of the secret police, Beria appeared to be associating himself personally with "liberal" policies.

Whether in fact these events were part of an effort by Beria to seize supreme power for himself, they were evidently sufficient grounds for his colleagues to make their move against him at a secretly pre-arranged meeting at the Kremlin on June 26, 1953. They stripped him of his posts in the party and government and placed him under arrest, ostensibly, in a final outburst of Stalinist fantasia, on the grounds that he had along been a Mussavatist agent of British imperialism!

Several Soviet accounts of Beria's arrest have reached the West, most of them from Khrushchev, who varied some of the details from audience to audience. All of the accounts have in common two points that reveal a great deal about the critical role played by primitive fear of physical violence at the very summit of the Soviet political system in the early summer of 1953.

1. The conspirators were fearful that Beria, through his control over secret police forces in place in the Kremlin and MVD troops in Moscow, could simply not be taken and was in a position to turn the

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tables on the conspirators. (The Presidium bodyguard, according to Khrushchev, was obedient to Beria.)

2. To ensure success, Beria's colleagues were obliged to seek the assistance of the military, who therefore became co-conspirators. According to Khrushchev, on his initiative, the apprehension of Beria was entrusted to Colonel General Moskalenko, Commander of the PVO of the Moscow Military District, and five other generals. On the eve of the session at which Beria was arrested, according to Khrushchev, Malenkov widened the circle to include Marshal Zhukov and four others, making a total of 11 marshals and generals. Moskalenko was evidently chosen because his was the only major command in the Moscow District not in the hands of MVD officers. Since all military personnel were normally required to check their weapons when entering the Kremlin, Defense Minister Bulganin had to make special arrangements so that the military men charged with detaining Beria could carry their weapons. The arrest, according to Khrushchev, was actually made on a secret signal from Malenkov to the group of marshals and generals waiting in an adjoining room. Even after the arrest had been made, Beria's control of the MVD made the Presidium fearful of turning him over to customary authorities. Instead, he was removed to a bunker at Moskalenko's PVO headquarters.

Beria's arrest and subsequent execution marked a major turning point in the post-Stalin evolution of the Soviet political system and had important indirect consequences for the management of Soviet military affairs as well.\* It led to a general weakening of the role of the Secret police apparatus in Soviet society at large, and most notably, to the elimination of the secret police as an instrument to be employed in factional struggle among the oligarchs. The execution of Beria and his associates turned out to be the last instance of the

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\* See below, pp.

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use of physical violence in factional struggle and its termination probably emboldened risk-taking by dissatisfied or ambitious members of the Presidium in subsequent factional struggles and conspiracies to remove the top leadership.

#### RISE OF KHRUSHCHEV

With the elimination of Beria, and along with him, of the police as an independent political power, the post-Stalin leadership entered its classic phase of "collective leadership," which proved to be short-lived. The next year and a half period was dominated by a struggle for a primacy between Malenkov and Khrushchev, the Soviet Premier and the Communist Party First Secretary, and by alliance-making and breaking by contenders within the Party Presidium. To some extent, the struggle also involved a competition between the state and party apparatuses headed by the two leaders and on which they based their bids for power.

The new leadership arrangement in the Party Presidium created an ambiguous situation with respect to the jurisdictions of the governmental and party apparatuses. It was clear that Presidium, as a collective body on which each full member had an equal vote, had the decisive say on any issue brought before it for decision. Under the Stalinist system (at least until its final phase), the ministries apparently moved along their own momentum as long as existing Politburo directives covered the contingencies with which they were confronted.\* When policy issues arose which could not be disposed of on the basis of past instructions, the responsible ministers would bring the matter to the Politburo member exercising broad supervisory responsibility in the area involved. Matters of lesser importance would be resolved at that level by the responsible Politburo members alone, or in consultation with the Politburo subgroup which he chaired or the appropriate central committee department or section. If in the judgment of the responsible Politburo member, the importance of the issue warranted it, it would be moved to the agenda of the full Politburo or, probably more often in Stalin's later years, settled by informal consultation

\* The discussion in this paragraph of party-government interrelations under Stalin as drawn from Fainsod, pp. 281-283.

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with, or directly by, Stalin himself. While the system implied that ministers could exercise considerable discretionary power in deciding which issues required treatment at higher levels, large disparities in political power between the ministers and their Politburo overseers and above all, Stalin's looming presence at the apex, limited their willingness to exercise it. Except in cases where ministers were carrying out direct mandates from Stalin, which evidently occurred frequently, they would be strongly inclined to refer new business to the Politburo rather than risk the dangerous charge that they had overstepped their authority.

With eight of the ten members of the new Presidium themselves in direct control of the highest posts in the government, and in the absence of a personal dictator at the top, many of the old constraints inhibiting the exercise of broad discretionary power at the ministerial level were probably weakened. Moreover, there was an intermediate government agency between the ministries and the Party Presidium in which issues requiring higher authorization could be resolved without moving them into the highest party channel. That was the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, chaired by Malenkov, in which five of the ten members of the Party Presidium sat. The potential for Presidium members who headed powerful ministries to escape the authority and tutelage of the Party Presidium collective and of the Secretariat was inherent in the new structure. (Two Presidium members, Beria and later, Zhukov, were in fact later charged with attempting to place their ministries, the MVD and the Ministry of Defense, respectively, beyond party control.) Similarly, the possibility for the head of the Soviet Government to attempt to rule directly through the government apparatus, inevitably arose as a threat to the party apparatus. Subsequently, Malenkov was indeed charged with precisely such an attempt.

Since the Party Presidium clearly had the final say on any policy issues that come before it, much depended on how its agenda was decided.\*

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\* Khrushchev provides a neat illustration of the political use of agenda-manipulation in recalling how he persuaded Malenkov to employ their joint control of the Presidium agenda in order to table issues on which Beria was likely to be outvoted. (Khrushchev, I, p. 331.)

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While agenda-setting for the Presidium has customarily been the responsibility of, and hence an important source of power for, the Secretariat of the Central Committee and its head, according to Khrushchev, at least in the initial period after Stalin's death, he as senior (later First) Secretary shared this power with Malenkov, who presided at Presidium meetings but was not himself (after March 14, 1953) a member of the Secretariat.\* Khrushchev tells us nothing about the agenda-setting process, but given his role as head of the Party apparatus, and government "outsider," versus Malenkov's, as head of the government apparatus and excluded from the Party Secretariat, there is ample reason for believing that determination by these two men jointly of which issues should be tabled for Presidium deliberation was a matter of frequent contention. It may be surmised that Khrushchev fought hard to place a broad range of issues involving government operations on the Presidium agenda, because he had no access to these issues so long as they were resolved in government channels.

The forced resignation of Malenkov as Premier in February 1955 and his removal as well from the Presidium of the Council of Ministers tipped the balance of power in favor of Khrushchev and the party apparatus. The new Premier, Bulganin, was Khrushchev's intimate and seemed quite content to play second fiddle to his more aggressive and energetic associate. But the demotion of Malenkov did not radically transform the balance of power within the Party Presidium. More than two years of hard factional infighting were required before the Party First Secretary could decisively alter the oligarchical rules of the "collective leadership" game that dominated Kremlin politics after the purge of Beria.

For Khrushchev, the most constraining rule was security of tenure for Presidium members. To protect themselves against the kind of political attrition through which Stalin in the twenties and early thirties had successively removed from the Politburo opponents against whom he was able to mount momentary factional majorities, the new oligarchs, after removing Beria, had evidently agreed among themselves

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\*Khrushchev, I., p. 325.

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that political defeat on policy issues would not, as in the past, automatically lead to removal from the Presidium. Thus, while Malenkov was compelled to resign from the Premiership when the consumer goods industry and agricultural policies with which he was associated were discredited, he was not removed from the Presidium. Similarly, Molotov, who was soon after taken under attack and degraded by Khrushchev, also held onto his Presidium post and to his vote, which he cast frequently against Khrushchev's preferred policies in the years that followed.

This system of mutual protection encouraged a degree of political independence on the part of individual members of the Presidium that was unprecedented in high-level Soviet politics since the late 1920s. Accordingly, factional lines were not tightly or permanently drawn and policy issues were frequently decided by shifting coalitions formed temporarily for a specific purpose, but not sustained after that purpose had been accomplished. Khrushchev proved his superiority as a politician by maneuvering successfully within these parameters. While his subsequent policies clearly indicate his own broad sympathies with the essential elements of the "New Course" advocated by Malenkov, he set those aside to form a temporary alliance with Old Guard forces in the leadership which opposed what they regarded as Malenkov's challenge to Party orthodoxy. By associating himself with the charges that Malenkov's policies violated basic Party doctrine on the priority of heavy industry and were insufficiently solicitous of the need to strengthen the defense capabilities of the country, Khrushchev secured the support of figures like Molotov and Kaganovich, and reached out for backing from the military as well, in order to remove Malenkov. Having disposed of Malenkov, Khrushchev moved to isolate Molotov, the most prestigious leader of the Old Guard. Successfully challenging Molotov's authority in foreign policy matters, Khrushchev precipitated a show-down with the Soviet Foreign Minister at the July 1955 plenum of the Central Committee at which Molotov was harshly criticized for opposing the foreign policy initiatives of Khrushchev and Bulganin,

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particularly their dramatic effort at rapprochement with Tito. Defeated at the plenum, Molotov was further obliged to undergo public humiliation, confessing in a *Kommunist* article on October 1955 that he had been guilty of ideological error in a speech delivered months earlier. Later in the year, there was evidence that Khrushchev was beginning to direct his fire at Kaganovich, whose public statements continued to resound with Stalinist verities and were strangely out of line with those of Khrushchev and Bulganin.

While he was yet unable to remove his opponents from the Party Presidium, Khrushchev's strategy was to dilute their power by bringing new forces into the leadership and to undermine the Old Guard's moral and political authority by implicating them in Stalin's crimes. At the July 1955 plenum, two new Presidium members were elected, Suslov and Kirichenko, the latter clearly Khrushchev's creature; and Khrushchev's power in the Secretariat was strengthened by the removal of Malenkov's protege, Shatalin, and the addition of four new secretaries, all of them Khrushchev loyalists.

Whatever other purposes may have motivated Khrushchev at the XX CPSU Congress in February 1956 to deliver his secret speech attacking Stalin and denouncing his "cult of personality," the text makes clear the factional purposes he intended it to serve and justifies the Old Guard's opposition to it. Exposing Stalin's crimes, Khrushchev skillfully protected himself, as well as Bulganin, by documenting their opposition to Stalin's transgressions, while implicating other veteran Presidium members: Malenkov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Molotov, and to a lesser extent, even Mikoyan, who subsequently became his close political ally. The speech, which was read widely to closed Party meetings inside the CPSU and circulated to fraternal parties abroad (a copy sent to the Polish party soon was acquired by the U.S. Government, which decided to publish it), did not topple Khrushchev's Old Guard opponents, but by discrediting them, made it unlikely that any of their number would be deemed fit to replace him. The composition of the Presidium remained unchanged after the XX Party Congress, but five new candidate members were added, four of whom were later promoted to full membership once Khrushchev succeeded in purging the Old Guard in 1957.

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Khrushchev's bold and dramatic gamble on anti-Stalinism drew the line decisively between himself and the members of the Old Guard most deeply implicated in Stalin's crimes: Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, and brought Voroshilov, wavering and rapidly descending into senility, into their camp. The rebellion and disarray in Eastern Europe that followed soon after the XX CPSU Congress appeared to confirm the Old Guard's warnings about the dangerous consequences of Khrushchev's precipitate plunge into anti-Stalinism, and the First Secretary's political fortunes appeared to be in decline at the end of 1956. Rumors that Khrushchev was in deep trouble circulated widely in Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, early in 1957, Khrushchev again seized the initiative, proposing a radical reorganization of the country's system of economic management. By shifting from a highly centralized Moscow-centered management of the country's industrial enterprises through ministries organized on functional lines to a territorial system that placed enterprises within given regions under the direct control of local economic councils (*sovmarkhozy*) coinciding more or less with republican or large oblast jurisdictions, Khrushchev alienated powerful members of the Moscow ministerial empire and created the basis for a temporary alliance between the Presidium Old Guard and the central economic managers, Pervukhin and Saburov. Bulganin, who may finally have rebelled against Khrushchev's assumption of prerogatives that rightfully belonged to him as Premier, apparently joined the conspirators at an early stage. Others, like Khrushchev's protege, the Party Secretary Shapilov, "who joined them," abandoned Khrushchev when it seemed evident that a Presidium majority against the First Secretary had emerged.

The motives of the men subsequently labelled "the anti-Party group" were mixed and they comprised a politically heterogeneous faction. Some may have acted out of a sense of personal political peril provoked by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization; others may have feared the destabilizing effects of de-Stalinization throughout the Communist world; some rebelled against what they evidently regarded as Khrushchev's unreasonably high and economically disruptive agricultural targets; for

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still others the radical economic management reorganization may have been the precipitating event. Some members of the anti-Khrushchev majority in the Presidium may have agreed to oppose particular policies of the Party First Secretary, but not to remove him from office. There is no evidence that issues of military policy figured directly in the struggle that culminated in an abortive effort to remove Khrushchev as First Secretary at a meeting of the Presidium held on June 18, 1957.

The efforts of the Presidium's "arithmetical majority" to depose the Party First Secretary were defeated by the successful insistence of Khrushchev and his supporters that the issue be moved to the Party Central Committee, the organ empowered by Party Statutes to appoint and remove members of the Presidium and Secretariat. The First Secretary's supporters on the Central Committee were reportedly mobilized by Khrushchevite loyalists in the Party Secretariat (Furtseva is mentioned most prominently). There was a widely circulated but unconfirmed rumor that Marshal Zhukov, then a candidate member of the Presidium, provided aircraft for transporting Central Committee members from the provinces quickly to Moscow. (Subsequently, Zhukov delivered a series of harsh attacks on the leaders of the "anti-Party group," demanding that they be taken to account for their participation in crimes of the Stalin era).

In any event, after an eight-day session of the Party Central Committee, ending on 30 June, Molotov, Maklenkov, Kagancvich, were removed from the Presidium and the Central Committee; Shepilov from the Secretariat and the Central Committee; Saburov from the Presidium; and Pervukhin was demoted to candidate membership. To replace them ten candidate Presidium members and Party Secretaries whom Khrushchev had advanced in 1956, were brought into the Presidium. Bulganin and Voroshilov received secret reprimands, but were for the time being permitted to retain their Presidium seats; they were relieved (in 1958 and 1960 respectively), leaving Khrushchev and Mikoyan as the only survivors of the "collective leadership" that succeeded Stalin in 1953.

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Meanwhile, in April 1958, despite his earlier criticism of Stalin for concentrating both the leading Party and governmental posts in his own bands, Party First Secretary Khrushchev succeeded Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers.\* Thereafter, as Khrushchev acknowledges, \*\* he increasingly conducted his business out of his office in the Council of Ministers, and, from his personal political perspective, the government versus party apparatus issue became academic.

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\* "...[m]y acceptance of [the Premiership] represented a certain weakness on my part — a bug of some sort which was gnawing away at me and undermining my power of resistance." (Khrushchev II, pp. 17-18.)

\*\* Khrushchev, II, p.

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III. DEFENSE DECISIONMAKINGVACUUM AT THE TOP?

(U) Khrushchev's pride in his self-proclaimed role as architect of the Soviet Union's nuclear age strategic posture is a striking feature of his reminiscences, but it is also a likely source of historical distortion. His condemnation of Stalin for failing to permit close associates and putative successors to participate intimately in strategic decisionmaking is consistent with what is known more generally about Stalin's style of political leadership during his declining years. But Khrushchev almost certainly exaggerates, for self-serving purposes, the vacuum left by Stalin's death in strategic matters at the highest leadership level. According to Khrushchev, Stalin, by arrogating to himself exclusive responsibility for high-level direction of the Soviet defense effort, made the difficult task of his successors "even harder for us":

Toward the end of his life, he did everything in his own name. He refused to discuss military matters with us; he gave us no training in the management of the Army. Defense was his exclusive concern, and he guarded it fiercely. If someone else expressed the slightest interest or curiosity about this or that new weapon, Stalin immediately became jealous or suspicious.\*

(U) The "us" to whom Khrushchev refers here are the members of the Bureau of the Party Presidium. Repeatedly, Khrushchev refers to their sense of isolation from military matters under Stalin, particularly their lack of experience with and knowledge of advanced weapon programs. Stalin did, it is clear, deal directly and intimately on military affairs with many other subordinates, those directly responsible for administering the military establishment and the weapons' research and development and production programs. But Khrushchev's contention is that there was no successor in the post-Stalin Presidium who had an integrated

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\*Khrushchev, II, p. 11.

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and comprehensive grasp of the multifaceted and ambitious weapon development programs of the post-war period, a number of which were nearing fruition when the dictator departed suddenly from the scene. In Khrushchev's version, among a group of novices, he emerged as the senior Party strategist.

(S) Khrushchev's picture is surely overdrawn. The new leadership included a number of men with substantial, high-level experience administering the military establishment and the defense industries of the Soviet Union. Beria is clearly an exception to Khrushchev's generalization about the isolation of Stalin's senior lieutenants from advanced weapons programs. As head of the secret police, Beria exercised overall control of the Soviet nuclear weapons program from its inception and may also have had some responsibility for missile research. It is true that he was arrested less than four months after Stalin's death; but Pervukhin, who had been involved in the atomic weapons program at least since 1949 and who subsequently became Minister of Medium Machine Building (the agency which superseded the First and Second Directorates of the Council of Ministers) provided the Presidium with direct and regular access to expertise on the nuclear weapons programs.

(U) The post-Stalin Presidium also included two former commissars or ministers of defense, Voroshilov and Bulganin, both of whom held the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. But Voroshilov's responsibilities in military affairs declined sharply after the Finnish War (1939-1940), when he relinquished his post as People's Commissar of Defense and during World War II, after his dismal performance as Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern (Leningrad) Front. While he remained a member of the State Defense Committee until the final months of World War II, he had no substantial role in the overall conduct of the war, and was charged with responsibility for the training of reserves and for direction of the partisan movement behind German lines. In the post-war period, his responsibilities in military affairs are believed to have been negligible. Moreover, as has been

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noted, in the final years of Stalin's life, Voroshilov fell into Stalin's disfavor and was banished from the dictator's circle. While the retention of this old veteran in the post-Stalin Presidium served useful symbolic purposes, Voroshilov, already lapsing into senility, was surely not the man to whom his colleagues would defer on strategic matters.

(U) Voroshilov's successor in November, 1944 as member of the State Defense Committee and as Stalin's ranking deputy in the Defense Commissariat was Bulganin, at that time not yet even a member of the Politburo. (He was promoted to that body in 1948.) A successful administrator in industry and government before the war, Bulganin, like many other high-ranking party leaders became a leading political officer on various fronts during World War II. Retaining his post as Stalin's first deputy in the defense ministry in the immediate post-war period, Bulganin succeeded Stalin in 1947 as Minister of the Armed Forces and served there until 1949, when like several other Politburo members and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, he relinquished his ministerial post to a subordinate (Marshal Vasilevsky). Bulganin may thereafter have continued to exercise oversight responsibility in the Politburo for the administration of the Soviet military establishment and was appointed Minister of Defense in the first post-Stalin government.

(U) Perhaps because Bulganin's military specialist credentials seem so clearly superior to Khrushchev's, the latter, in his memoirs, makes a special point of denigrating Bulganin's expertise and expresses puzzlement about Stalin's reasons for elevating Bulganin to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union and naming him to head the Defense Ministry in 1947. As if to demonstrate Bulganin's deference to Khrushchev's superior military qualities, Khrushchev asserts that it was at Bulganin's recommendation that the Party First Secretary, because of his "considerable experience in military affairs," was appointed Commander-in-Chief.\*

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\* Khrushchev, II, pp. 12-13.

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(U) While the positions he held in the post-war period under Stalin suggest that Bulganin was probably the most broadly knowledgeable Presidium member on current Soviet military affairs, he was not after 1953 a publicly assertive Defense Minister and may well have been overshadowed by his prestigious professional military deputies, Zhukov and Vasilevsky. After he became Premier in February 1955, Bulganin rarely spoke publicly on defense matters, leaving the field primarily to Defense Minister Zhukov and other high-ranking professionals, and, among the political leaders, increasingly to Khrushchev.

(U) Most of the other Presidium members held positions of high responsibility in the defense effort during World War II. Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov, and Mikoyan, in addition to Voroshilov and later Bulganin, served on the State Defense Committee. Malenkov is reported to have had overall responsibility for aircraft production and served as a special representative of the State Defense Committee on various fronts during the war. He was not, however, given a military rank like Bulganin, Khrushchev and many others. Kaganovich had overall responsibility for transportation during the war. Molotov, at least until 1943, had oversight responsibility of Soviet tank production and held the title of Stalin's principal deputy on the State Defense Committee. Mikoyan specialized in the procurement of food supplies, fuel and other items for the Red Army.

(U) There was nothing in Khrushchev's background to suggest that he had any stronger claim than any of his colleagues to the preeminent role in military affairs that he subsequently achieved, or that his associates had any reason to defer to him in military matters on grounds of demonstrated superior competence. Unlike the rest of the Old Guard members of the pre-XIX Congress Politburo, Khrushchev had at no time during the war served on the State Defense Committee in Moscow. He had no experience in supervising defense industries. His service as party representative on military councils at the front during the war was not a unique kind of experience. But Khrushchev's

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major advantage over his colleagues in recruiting a personal following in the Soviet High Command after Stalin's death came from his superior political skill in capitalizing on his wartime associations with front commanders who had served with him. In his capacity as "Member of the Military Council" of various southern fronts, particularly at Stalingrad, Khrushchev had in effect been the intermediary between the Supreme High Command in Moscow and the field commanders. To an extent apparently unmatched by other party representatives at the front, Khrushchev had identified with the interests of the field against the center, or at least succeeded in conveying that impression to the generals with whom he served.\* As a result, his personal associations with military leaders who during the mid-1950s advanced to leading positions in the High Command, were more extensive and intimate than those of his Presidium colleagues. Included among the marshals and generals who served with Khrushchev during the war were Malinovsky, Grechko, Konev, Moskalenko, Biryuzov, Yeremenko, Zakharov, Krylov, Bargamyan, Yakuboskii, Rudenko, Sudets, Yepishev, and Golikov.

#### KHRUSHCHEV'S EMERGENCE AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

In a larger sense, Khrushchev's lament about the inadequate preparation of Stalin's successors to assume the departed dictator's responsibilities for directing Soviet military policy is beside the point. The office of Supreme Commander-in-Chief had lapsed when Stalin resigned from it and was not among the offices filled in the March 1953 division of Stalin's powers. Given the mutual concern of Presidium members to prevent a lopsided concentration of power in the hands of any one of them, they could hardly have agreed to create a new office conferring supreme military power on a single individual.

The Soviet Constitution, even supposing Stalin's successors were prepared literally to abide by its provisions, provided little

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\* See Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, 1967, pp. 220-243.

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help in fixing the locus of supreme military power. It specifies only that the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (an honorific body of political second-raters formally presided over by its chairman, then Voroshilov) "appoints and removes the high command of the armed forces of the USSR" in intervals between sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, "proclaims a state of war in the event of military attack on the USSR, or when necessary to fulfill international treaty obligations," and "orders general or partial mobilization." Authority to "direct the general organization of the armed forces of the country" and to fix the annual contingent of conscripts to be called to service is settled on another collective body, the USSR Council of Ministers, chaired after Stalin's death by Malenkov. The Party Presidium, of course, is granted no specific political powers by the State Constitution.

(U) As Minister of Defense in the first post-Stalin Soviet government, Bulganin served as the most direct and immediate link between the Party leadership and the Soviet military establishment and exercised administrative control over the armed forces, reporting in the formal governmental chain of command to the Council of Ministers and its chairman, Malenkov. On those military issues which did not get placed on the agenda of the Party Presidium, Malenkov and Bulganin probably enjoyed considerably more discretionary authority than any of their colleagues.

(U) Prior to the designation of Khrushchev as Commander-in-Chief, an ambiguous situation obtained in which the Presidium probably functioned as a collective *de facto* Commander-in-Chief. Ironically, this situation arose precisely during the period when Soviet military doctrine began to address the possibly fatal consequences of surprise attack with nuclear weapons and to emphasize the vital importance of timely warning, quick reaction, and even pre-emption. Operationally, however, these doctrinal strictures of the mid-1950s were largely irrelevant because the Soviet armed forces did not begin to acquire any significant capacity for quick-reaction nuclear strikes, much less preemptive attacks, until much later, by which time Khrushchev

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had been installed as Commander-in-Chief. Indeed, it may have been the creation at the end of 1959 of the Strategic Rocket Forces, in which the first significant Soviet capability for quick reaction or pre-emption eventually came to reside, that made formal designation of a Supreme Commander seem operationally essential.\*

(U) Khrushchev's own version of the circumstances surrounding his appointment as Commander-in-Chief places that event in a much earlier time frame and is suspect on several grounds.

[Bulganin, while Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers] suggested that since I'd had considerable experience in military affairs, I as First Secretary of the party Central Committee, take on the job of commander in chief of the armed forces as well. The other comrades in the leadership had no objection, and my appointment as commander in chief was approved. This was a strictly internal decision. We decided not to publicize the decision and made no mention of it in the press. If we had been at war, we would certainly have announced my military appointment to the Soviet people. As for the top officers of our armed forces, they certainly knew who their commander in chief was without having to read an announcement in the newspaper.

At first the Minister of Defense under me was Zhukov....\*\*

(U) Taken at face value, Khrushchev's account indicates that his appointment was casually suggested and secretly approved sometime after February 1955, when Bulganin became Chairman of the Council of Ministers, but before October 1957, when Zhukov was dismissed as Minister of Defense. The appointment, if one was actually made during that period, did not become public knowledge until October 1961 when then Defense Minister Malinovsky identified Khrushchev as Commander-in-Chief in a speech before the USSR Supreme Soviet. Whether the appointment was in fact made early in that period or toward its end, or still later

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\* See Spielman, p.

\*\* Khrushchev, II, pp. 12-13.

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around the time it was publicly disclosed, is important for estimating Khrushchev's personal weight in major defense decisions after 1955, but while some dates are more plausible than others, the issue cannot be resolved on the strength of available evidence.

(U) After the demotion of Malenkov in February 1955, Khrushchev was clearly *primus inter pares* in the Party Presidium, but still a long way from the preeminence he enjoyed after the purge of the "anti-Party group" in July 1957. He did not become Chairman of the Council of Ministers until April 1958. It seems unlikely that the Party Presidium, of which Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich were still members, would have agreed to confer upon the Party First Secretary the office of Commander-in-Chief, when Khrushchev was still unwilling to seek or unable to secure the post of Premier. But with the Ministry of Defense passing from Bulganin to a non-member of the Party Presidium, Marshal Zhukov, the Party leadership may have wished to fix oversight responsibility for defense in a Presidium sub-group, and it is possible that Khrushchev headed it.\* (The existence of a Presidium defense sub-group in the 1960s is well established, and the appointment of specialized Politburo sub-groups is known to have been widely practiced by Stalin earlier.)

(U) If Khrushchev's appointment did occur within the time frame implied by his account, it is most likely to have taken place in the period between July 1957, when the "anti-Party group" was defeated, and October 1957, when Zhukov was purged. The new Party Presidium elected in July was packed with Khrushchev proteges and his remaining former opponent's, living on borrowed time, were in no position to

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\*<sup>48</sup> If so, the Presidium defense sub-group may have represented the Party leadership in a separate body where high level Party-High Command interface occurred. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (On the Higher Military Council, see below, pp. 36-38.)

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block his appointment. On the other hand, it was precisely at that point that Defense Minister Zhukov, at the height of his political influence in the Party and his authority in the military establishment, was brought into the Party Presidium. After Zhukov was removed both from the Party Presidium and his post as Defense Minister in October, leaving the MOD once again without Presidium-level representation, there were no longer any substantial impediments to appointing Khrushchev Commander-in-Chief. The appointment may not have been formalized until after April 1958, when Khrushchev succeeded Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, thus for the first time becoming a member of the Soviet government.

#### PARTY PRESIDIUM-HIGH COMMAND INTERFACE

(U) Khrushchev refers repeatedly in his memoirs to meetings on defense matters in which the Defense Minister and other members of the High Command participated, along with members of the Party Presidium. Whether during the early post-Stalin years a special organizational entity existed that provided a meeting ground for the Party and military leaderships is uncertain. Such a body, called during most of its incarnations the Higher Military Council, existed in the pre-war period and was revived after the war when the State Defense Committee was dissolved.\* From 1951 to 1953, when there were separate Ministries of War and Navy, "Main Military Councils" were created within each ministry and a Higher Military Council superior to both, was attached to the Council of Ministers.

(U) The fate of the high-level council system after the creation of a unified Ministry of Defense in March 1953, is not known. Several years after the October 1957 purge of Marshal Zhukov, it was charged that the former Defense Minister had "insisted on the elimination of the Higher Military Council, a collective organ whose members and candidate members of the Central Committee Presidium.... and military and

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(S) \* For the evolution of the Higher Military Council, see Parkinson paper.

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political leaders of the Army and Navy."\* How successful Zhukov had been in "eliminating" the Higher Military Council is unclear, but there is strong evidence that under his administration the authority of mixed Party-military organs functioning at various levels within the military establishment was reduced and that Zhukov succeeded in concentrating their activities increasingly within the Ministry of Defense chain of command. At the October 1957 plenum, Zhukov was accused of "trying in every possible way to isolate the Central Committee from the task of resolving the most important questions associated with the life of the Army and Navy" and of having sought "to bring the Army and Navy from under the control" of the Party and its Central Committee.

(U) A somewhat more plausible interpretation of the "Bona-partism" charge brought against Zhukov is not that he attempted (unrealistically) to escape Presidium-level control of the Defense Ministry altogether, but rather that he sought by "eliminating" or weakening the role of joint collective Party-military organs linking the military establishment with the Party Presidium, to reserve for himself exclusive access to the Party summit where he could personally represent the interests of the Soviet military according to his own lights.\*\* This effort was facilitated by Zhukov's election first to candidate (February 1956) and then to full membership (July 1957) in the Party Presidium. During those years, Khrushchev, with whom Zhukov evidently saw eye-to-eye on major issues of military policy, may in fact have preferred such an arrangement, because it kept military policy views different from his and Zhukov's from being represented before the Party Presidium.

~~(S)~~ Once Khrushchev had defeated the "anti-Party group," he no longer needed to rely on Zhukov's authority in resolving military policy issues in the Presidium and quickly dissolved his

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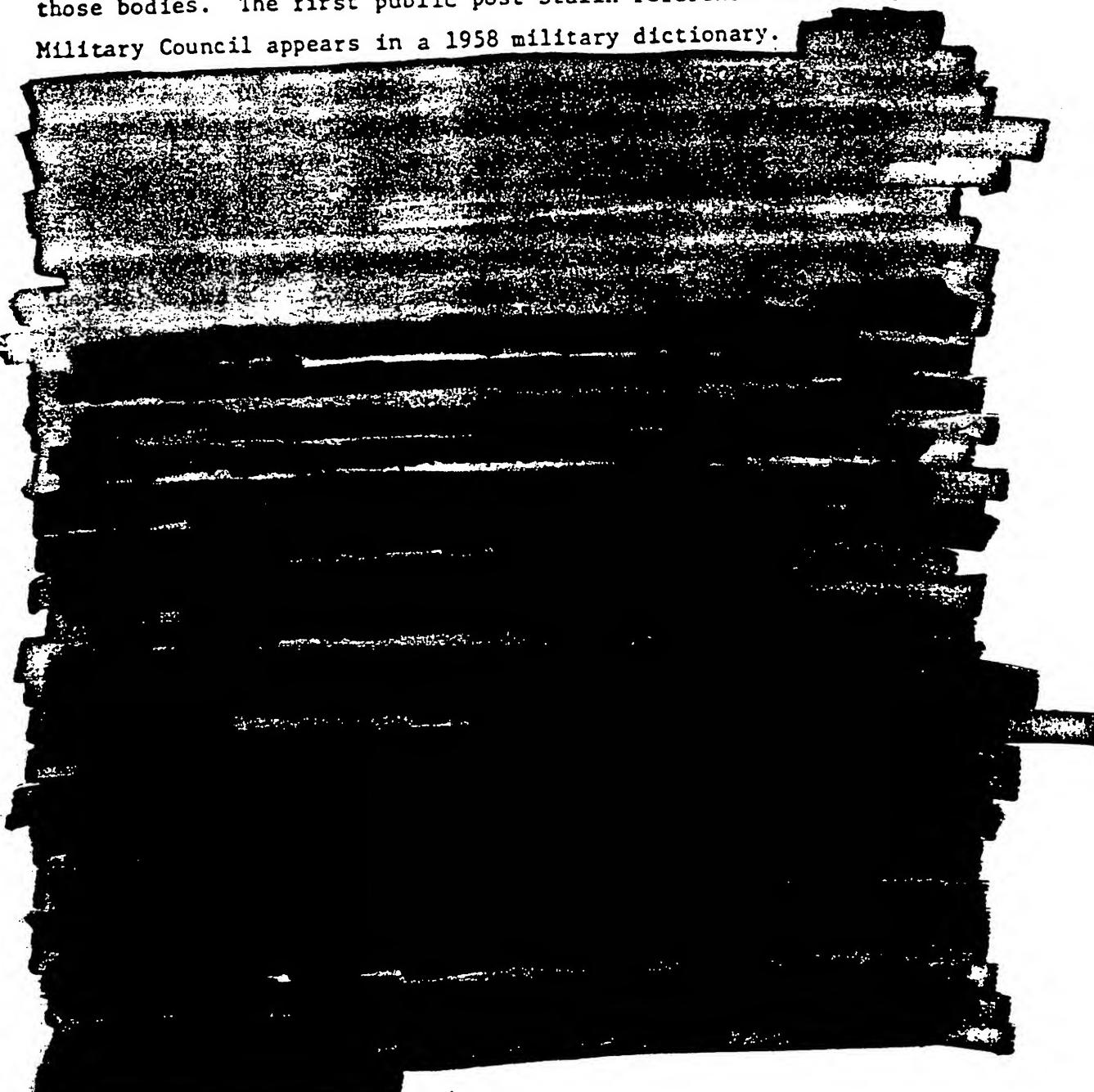
\* Petrov, pp. 462-463.

\*\* Moskalenko charged that as a result of Zhukov's "crude trampling of Leninist principles,...the situation reached the point where Communists were actually not permitted to address the Central Committee of the Party, to express their proposals and ideas." (Krasnaya Zvezda, 3 November 1957.)

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partnership with the Defense Minister, the only remaining Presidium member whose prestige rivalled his own. Thereafter, from a position of greatly enhanced power, Khrushchev revitalized the entire military council system, in the military districts and the services, as well as at the highest level, and strengthened party representation in those bodies. The first public post-Stalin reference to the Higher Military Council appears in a 1958 military dictionary.

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THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT

(U) The death of Stalin led almost inevitably to a rise in the prestige and eventually the political influence of the military establishment, particularly of the wartime heroes, whom a jealous and suspicious Stalin had deprived of honors and rewards. Factional struggle unleashed in the Kremlin by the dictator's demise soon drew the Soviet military into political involvement to a degree unprecedented in Soviet history. But initially, at least, the composition of the High Command was little affected by Stalin's death.

(U) Immediate post-Stalin changes in the upper echelons of the Ministry of Defense appear to have been limited to those required to accommodate the amalgamation of the old Ministries of War and Navy and the return of Marshal Bulganin to head the reunified Ministry. Marshal Vasilevsky, the former Minister of War, became a First Deputy Minister of Defense, together with Marshal Zhukov, whose earlier secret return to the High Command from provincial exile (late 1952), was now publicized. Admiral Kuzenstsov, the former Minister of the Navy, also became a First Deputy Minister. Marshal Sokolovsky, who had already succeeded General Shtemenko as Chief of Staff in late 1952 or early 1953, remained in place, as did all of the service chiefs and commanders of semi-independent services: Kuznetsov, CINC, Soviet Navy; Marshal Zhigarev, CINC, Air Force; General Aladinskiy, CINC, LRA; and Marshal Govorov, who had headed the PVO since 1947 and who became CINC, PVO, when that post was created in 1954. It is generally assumed that Marshal Zhukov had become CINC, Soviet Ground Forces, when he was brought back to Moscow in 1952 and that he continued in that office until February, 1955, when he succeeded Bulganin as Defense Minister. However, there is no confirmation of this in Soviet sources, which have never identified the incumbent in that office during the entire period from the end of Marshal Konev's stewardship in 1950 until his reappointment in 1955.

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\* See Appendix, Tables IV, V, VI, for listings of High Command changes, 1953-1972.

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(U) The only major figure from Stalin's High Command to suffer loss of status was General Shtemenko, Chief of Staff from 1950-1952, who had been replaced by Sokolovsky toward the end of Stalin's life and apparently sent to East Germany. A little known staff officer during the war who had held no field commands and was generally assumed to have been a favorite of Stalin's, Shtemenko was demoted two ranks (from Army-General to Lt. General) and assigned to a provincial command.

(U) At a lower command level, the arrest of Beria in the summer of 1953 was followed by major shifts in the Moscow Military District which saw professional military men replace MVD generals in key command posts. Col. Gen. Moskalenko, who was a close wartime associate of Khrushchev and played a key role in the arrest of Beria, was promoted to Army General and placed in command of the Moscow Military District, replacing Frontier Guards General P. A. Artemiev. A former wartime corps commander under Moskalenko, Lt. Gen. A. Y. Yedenin succeeded MVD General Spiridonov, as Commandant of the Kremlin, and another regular line command officer, Maj. Gen. I. S. Kolsenikov, replaced Frontier Guards General K. R. Sinilov as Commandant of Moscow city. The shift in the balance of power between the Army and the secret police, the two institutions commanding the instruments of violence in the country, was neatly symbolized by the election of Marshal Zhukov to full membership in the Party Central Committee, filling the seat vacated by Beria.

(U) The composition of the High Command remained stable until February 1955, when Bulganin vacated the post of Minister of Defense to become Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Marshal Zhukov became Defense Minister, passing over Vasilevsky, who had been Minister of War in the last Stalin government. Zhukov's promotion opened the way for the return of Marshal Konev to Moscow to take over as CINC, Ground Forces, presumably in succession to Zhukov. When Vasilevsky, Zhukov's first deputy, retired the following year, Konev, who had meanwhile also been named Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Pact military forces created in May 1955, became Zhukov's

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principal deputy, vacating command of the ground forces. Konev, in turn, was replaced by Marshal Malinovsky, another close World War II associate of Khrushchev's, and apparently the Party First Secretary's favorite among the senior marshals. \*

(U) A month after Zhukov became Minister of Defense, a large number of generals and marshals, frozen in rank by Stalin since the end of the war, were promoted, six to the highest rank, Marshal of the Soviet Union (Bagramyan, Biryuzov, Chuikov, Yeremenko, Grechko, Moskalenko). Others were advanced to the rank of Chief Marshal or Marshal of a service, and General of the Army. A large proportion of those promoted had been field commanders on the Stalingrad Front and served with Khrushchev, but appeared to merit their promotions by virtue of seniority and outstanding wartime service. But two of them, Moskalenko and Grechko who were particularly close to Khrushchev, had been twice promoted since Stalin's death and may have benefitted from the First Secretary's influence.

(U) Changes in the High Command during the second half of the 1950s saw many of Khrushchev's World War II associates move into leading positions, but, at least until the purge of Marshal Zhukov, in October 1957, it is unclear how important Khrushchev's influence may have been in securing their advancement. Zhukov himself had not served with Khrushchev, and owed nothing to the latter's wartime patronage. \*\* One Stalingrad veteran, Marshal Biryuzov, who subsequently helped to glorify Khrushchev as a wartime leader and years later (1963) was clearly Khrushchev's choice as Chief of Staff, became CINC, PVO after the death of Marshal Govorov in the spring of 1955; but Biryuzov had already been Govorov's principal deputy. Similarly, the appointment of Marshal Malinovsky to succeed Konev as CINC,

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\* See Khrushchev's warm references to Malinovsky in Khrushchev, I, pp. 200-205 and Khrushchev II, pp. 16, 28, 34, 456-459.

\*\* Perhaps to carry favor with Zhukov, or to gain credit for protecting a popular hero, Khrushchev claimed in his secret speech at the XX Congress that he had defended Zhukov against Stalin's slurs on the Marshal's competence. (Khrushchev, I, p. 594.)

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Ground Forces, in 1956, placed another close Khrushchev associate in the highest echelon of the High Command; but Malinovsky's move to his new post from command of Soviet Far East Forces did not represent an unusual jump. And while Khrushchev apparently took the initiative in securing the dismissal of Admiral Kuznetsov in 1955 the latter's successor as CINC, Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov had no wartime connection with Khrushchev and was known "only slightly" \* by the First Secretary.

(U) High command appointments bear Khrushchev's imprint more unambiguously after the purge of Marshal Zhukov, which appears to have been unrelated to any differences between the two men over strategic policy. Marshal Konev, the principal deputy and second only to Zhukov himself as a World War II hero, was passed over in favor of Khrushchev's friend, Malinovsky as the new Minister of Defense. According to Khrushchev, Zhukov himself recommended Konev to succeed him, \*\* surprising, if true, since the two marshals were wartime rivals and Konev was one of Zhukov's principal accusers at the October 1957 CC plenum which ousted the Defense Minister. Succeeding Malinovsky as CINC Ground Forces, was Marshal Grechko, another "southerner," who commanded the Kiev Military District after the war while Khrushchev was Ukrainian Party First Secretary. With the retirement in 1960 of Konev and Sokolovsky (the latter succeeded as Chief of Staff by another Stalingrad commander, Marshal Zakharov), the Soviet High Command was led and dominated by men who were close to Khrushchev personally or who had been his wartime comrades-in-arms.

#### DEFENSE INDUSTRIES

(U) The ministerial amalgamations of March 1953, which resulted in the merger of the War and Navy Ministries into a single Ministry of Defense, affected the organization of defense-related industrial

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\* Khrushchev, II, p. 28.

\*\* Khrushchev, II, p. 17.

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ministries even more drastically, but left most of the same administrators in charge with different titles.\* The seven old ministries believed to be producing most military end-items and components (Armaments, Aviation Industry, Shipbuilding Industry, Electrical Industry, Power Stations, Motor Vehicle and Tractor Industry, and Machine and Instrument Building Industry) were merged into four. D. F. Ustinov, former Minister of the Armaments Industry, was named to head a new Ministry of Defense Industry, which may have absorbed military production from the old Ministry of Aviation Industry, now dissolved. V. A. Malyshev, the key defense industries troubleshooter who had been moved by Stalin to the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry in 1950 to manage the large naval construction program, was appointed to head a new super-Ministry of Transport and Heavy Machine Buildings, which absorbed several old ministries, defense and civilian. Two other defense-related ministries, the Minister of Power Stations and Electrical Industry and the Ministry of Machine Building were created and assigned respectively to Presidium members Pervukhin and Saburov. Defense industrial ministers displaced in these mergers for the most part became deputies in the new amalgamated ministries.

(S) Nuclear weapons production, managed by the First and Second Directorates of the Council of Ministers, but actually under the control of the Ministry of Interior and State Security, was initially not affected. However, in a decree dated June 26, 1953, the day of Beria's arrest, a new Ministry of Medium Machine Building was created and the nuclear weapons program was secretly transferred to its control. Malyshev was appointed Minister three days later and was succeeded in the Ministry of Transport and Heavy Machine Building by I. I. Nosenko, Malyshev's first deputy in the Shipbuilding Ministry under Stalin.

(U) The amalgamation, which squeezed 40 old industrial ministries into 16 new ones, proved to be short-lived. It was the first in a long series of unsuccessful experiments in industrial management reorganization

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\* See Appendix, Table VII, Ministers of Soviet Defense Ministries, 1955-1972.

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carried out in the 1950s. The super-ministries were too large and, beginning in August, 1953, they were split up again. Several of the old defense-industry ministries were reconstituted (Aviation Industry, Machine and Instrument Building, Shipbuilding Industry) and placed under their former ministers or deputy ministers. In April 1955, a new Ministry of General Machine Building was formed under P. N. Goryemykin to manage production for the emerging Soviet missile and space programs.

(U) In the spring of 1957, a radical and controversial industrial management reorganization scheme sponsored by Khrushchev abolished the traditional Soviet system of administering the operation of industrial enterprise through centralized ministries organized on functional lines. A decentralized system of regional economic councils (*sovmarkhozy*) organized on geographical lines was created in its place. All enterprises located on the territory covered by a given *sovmarkhоз* came under its administrative jurisdiction. Initially, the defense-industrial sector was exempted (the Ministries of Defense Industry, Aviation Industry, Shipbuilding, Radio-Technical Industry and Medium Machine Building, were the only industrial ministries retained).

(U) The exemption of the defense industrial ministries had not been provided for in Khrushchev's initial proposal and may have been a concession by him to military concerns that decentralization would adversely affect defense production, weakening the Defense Ministry's ability to coordinate military R&D and weapons production programs, and placing enterprises serving military customers under strong local pressures to increase the output of civilian products at the expense of military production. That Marshal Zhukov may have been instrumental in securing exemption for the defense industrial ministries is suggested by the fact that they were abolished in December 1957, shortly after Zhukov's ouster.

~~(S)~~ The new arrangement was a compromise of sorts. The ministries were transformed into state committees with same names. Military R&D institutes and bureaus were subordinated to the State Committees, which

continued to report directly to the Council of Ministers and remained outside the *sovmarkhоз* system. But responsibility for the defense production evidently shifted to the *sovmarkhozy*, or may have been shared by the latter and the State Committees. Whatever precise arrangements may have been made to safeguard national military production interests within the framework of the decentralized *sovmarkhоз* system, the abolition of the defense industrial ministries almost certainly created new problems for coordinating the production end of military programs which involved a multiplicity of enterprises operating in many different economic regions. It was probably to deal with these problems that Khrushchev promoted the former Minister of Armaments Industry, Ustinov, to Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, instead of placing him at the head of the new State Committee for Defense Technology that took over his old ministry. Operating out of the Council of Ministers, Ustinov became head of a centralized body presiding over all of the State Committees involved in defense production. Whether that body, the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK), was newly formed at the time, or existed earlier to coordinate military R&D and weapons production programs conducted by the defense industrial ministeries, is not clear. A "permanent Military-Industrial Commission" had been established before the war by Central Committee resolution (1938), but was probably absorbed into the State Defense Committee system during the war. In the post-war period there was no reliable evidence of its existence until 1957-1958.

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\*(U) See Poppe draft for evolution of VPK.

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IV. MAJOR DEFENSE DECISIONS1. Decisions on aggregate military expenditures and shift of resources from ground forces to strategic forces

~~(S)~~ In the last full year of Stalin's rule, Soviet military expenditures reached their highest point since the end of the World War II and the Soviet armed forces were larger than at any time since the early post-war demobilization.\* The lion's share of the defense budget was going to the swollen Soviet ground forces. When Stalin died, procurement costs for the USSR first nuclear delivery systems still lay ahead and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons on a substantial scale was only just getting underway. Large outlays had already been made in strategic air defense, but larger increments would be required shortly to procure the first generation of SAMs, improved radar equipment, and all-weather interceptors that were in advanced stages of development.

(U) To procure these new weapons and to continue to nourish the aggressive strategic weapons R&D programs initiated in the late 1940s and early 1950s would require either (1) very substantial increases in overall military expenditures, which were already at the time of Stalin's death absorbing between 15 and 20% of Soviet GNP; (2) a redistribution of the Soviet defense budget to free up resources for strategic weapons procurement and new R&D without substantially raising the level of aggregate spending; or (3) some compromise between the two. It is clear that post-Stalin leaderships chose the second alternative: the level of aggregate military spending from 1953 through the end of the decade remained virtually constant while sharply rising costs for strategic offensive and defensive forces and R&D were offset by deep cuts in expenditures for ground forces,

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\* Data on Soviet military forces and budgets during the 1950s are presented and analyzed in WN (L) 9266-ARPA, on which the discussion in this section draws.

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tactical aviation, and smaller ones for the Soviet Navy (excluding "strategic" naval forces).

~~(S)~~ How Stalin intended to pay for the new weaponry which was already well advanced in the R&D pipeline when he died is not known. Overall defense expenditures are estimated to have declined by about 3.4% in 1973, but it cannot be assumed that the reduction was the consequence of decisions taken before Stalin's death in March of that year. There is, however, some evidence of a downward shift in the relative weight of the ground forces in Soviet military expenditures even earlier. Various mid-year 1973 estimates of total Soviet military manpower indicate that there had been a substantial decline during the previous year (SCAM, 645,000, and SOVOY, 200,000) virtually all of it at the expense of ground forces.\* Even reductions on the order of 200,000 would have been difficult to achieve by mid-year if the decision was made only after Stalin's death and cuts three times as large almost certainly would have required a much earlier decision. Unfortunately the reliability of manpower estimates in those years is particularly uncertain and does not permit confident judgments about the extent to which military manpower reductions in the immediate post-Stalin period may have been the consequence of decisions already taken while Stalin lived.

~~(S)~~ In any case, it is clear that a very substantial reallocation of defense resources, most notably a sharp reduction in military manpower, had already taken place when the Soviet Government, in mid-1955, announced the first in a series of troop reductions. CIA data indicate a decline of 800,000, almost entirely at the expense of the ground forces, between mid-1953 and mid-1955.\*\* In the next

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\* WN(1)-9248-ARPA, Table 1, p. 4 (Secret).

\*\* Soviet sources make no reference to cuts in military manpower prior to mid-1955 and imply that the troop reduction policy was initiated only at the time of the first announced cut in July of that year. Manpower data released by Khrushchev in 1960, which skipped the period between 1948 (2.9 million) and 1955 (5.7 million) conveyed the same impression (*Pravda*, January 15, 1960). And in his memoirs, Khrushchev also dates the reductions from mid-1955, observing that "it took us a while before we reached the point that we were ready to make our cutbacks." (Khrushchev, II, p. 220.)

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four years, Soviet military manpower was cut back by some 1.5 million, of which 1.2 million were taken from the ground forces. The ground forces' share of total military expenditures declined from over 40% in 1952 to under 25% at the end of the decade.

(U) In the light of the massive scale of these troop reductions, it is remarkable that there is no evidence of opposition to these cuts from Khrushchev's political enemies or of resistance from inside the military establishment. This apparent quiescence contrasts with clear and unambiguous military opposition to the fresh round of cuts which Khrushchev announced in January 1960, at a time when he was at the height of his political power.

~~(S)~~ During the "defense debate" of 1954 and early 1955, Khrushchev, who subsequently emerged as the champion of troop reductions, ranged himself on the side of those who, at least by implication, charged Soviet Premier Malenkov with neglecting Soviet defenses. While the size of the overall military budget for 1955 may have been in contention in that debate, the particular issues involved are obscure. The debate, such as it was, had two facets: one group, which included Malenkov, Pervukhin, and Saburov, stressed in their public speeches the need to increase production of consumer goods and ignored what in the Stalinist period had been ritualistic invocations of the need to "strengthen the Soviet armed forces." Another group, which included Bulganin and Voroshilov, in addition to Khrushchev, emphasized the traditional priority of heavy industry and called consistently for "strengthening the armed forces." The "strengtheners" also warned repeatedly of the increased danger of nuclear surprise attack and denied that the mere possession of nuclear weapons on the two sides provided a basis for reliable deterrence of nuclear war, as Malenkov at one point had implied.\* The implication appeared to be that expenditures for strategic offense and defense forces needed to be increased. A sharp rise occurred both in announced (12%) and estimated actual

\* For an account of the 1954-55 defense debate see, A. Horelick and M. Rush, R-409-PR, pp.

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military expenditures (7.2%) in the year Malenkov was removed as Premier, but military manpower continued to decline in that year and the lion's share of the expenditures increase went to the LRA. Thus, while the appropriate level of military expenditures may have been an issue in factional politics 1954-1955, the principle of paying for the Soviet Union's new strategic forces largely at the expense of the ground forces had apparently not been questioned. Khrushchev's commitment to a larger defense budget, if it was even more than a factional ploy, was short-lived in any case. During the next two years, as the Party First Secretary's influence in defense decision-making grew, overall expenditures, both announced and estimated actual, declined once again.

(U) The uninterrupted downturn of military manpower levels from 1952-1953 until the end of the decade probably reflected a broad consensus in the political leadership that the post-1945 buildup under Stalin had been excessive, or that changed circumstances, particularly the end of the Korean War and U.S. military manpower reductions that followed, permitted Soviet conventional forces to be cut. Khrushchev asserts in his memoirs that when the Soviet Government put forward its two-stage disarmament proposal in May 1955, which called for nuclear disarmament, the elimination of foreign bases, and reductions of U.S. and Soviet conventional forces to a common ceiling of 1.5 million, the Soviet leaders were already prepared for further reductions in their own ground forces unilaterally, if necessary.\* The streamlining and modernization of Soviet ground forces, reducing the size of units and increasing their mobility, was already under way. Defense Minister Zhukov, according to Khrushchev, supported the policy of reducing the size of the armed forces and had himself initiated a number of measures (including reductions of salaries and benefits)\*\* that must have been unpopular

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\* Khrushchev, II, p. 220..

\*\* Khrushchev, II, pp. 13-14, 221. "Unlike so many thick-headed types you find wearing uniforms, Zhukov understood the necessity of reducing our military expenditures. "...it was...under Zhukov that we reached an agreement in the leadership to reduce our standing army by half." (p. 13).

with the shrinking Soviet officer corps. The failure of any significant opposition to the cuts to be expressed by the Soviet military, thus depriving Khrushchev's political opponents of ammunition to use against him in the intra-Party struggle, suggests that Khrushchev and Zhukov established a close working alliance during the mid-1950s and that between them, they largely controlled decisionmaking on the major military policy issues of that period.

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\* "[Zhukov] and I were on excellent terms. I had the highest respect for his judgment. Depending on the atmosphere, I would address him sometimes just as 'George,' sometime as 'George Konstantonovich,' or, more formally, as 'Comrade Zhukov.'" (Khrushchev II, p. 223).

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2. Decision to procure only a modest force of intercontinental bombers

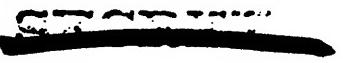
(S) In the year Stalin died, the Soviet Long Range Air Force comprised some 1000 TU-4 (BULL) aircraft, which were Tupolev-designed copies of the U.S. World War II B-29A. The BULL force reached a peak deployment of 1300 the following year, 1954, after which phase-out commenced, leading to the total retirement of the force at the end of the decade.\* The BULL was a range-limited piston-engined medium bomber, which required readily detectable Arctic base staging to reach the continental United States on a one-way mission. In his memoirs, Khrushchev slights the BULL as "one of the less successful" of Tupolev's designs, "a perfectly good plane, but... already outdated by the time it went into production."\*\* It had no air-to-air refueling capability; the extensive forward basing required for its operation against U.S. targets was underdeveloped and may not have been usable at all except under the most favorable weather conditions. Furthermore, it is not clear that the LRA had the technical capacity or the appropriate support equipment and infrastructure to operate a bomber force in the harsh Arctic environment.\*\*\*

(S) It is questionable whether Stalin or the Soviet High Command ever regarded the large force of BULLS they acquired as possessing more than a peripheral attack capability, at best representing an intermediate step toward providing the Soviet Union with a true capability to strike U.S. targets with nuclear weapons. No Soviet claims of a capability to strike the United States were ever made when the LRA possessed only piston-engined bombers. There is no evidence that the BULLs were ever modified or exercised in the manner that would have been required to realize the theoretical capabilities elaborated in contemporary U.S. intelligence estimates for striking U.S. continental targets. BULLs were procured in quantities that exceeded by many times even the most liberal estimates of the Soviet nuclear bomb stockpile of the early 1950s and were largely phased out of the LRA before large numbers of weapons became available. The TU-4 did provide the Soviet Union with a significant conventional medium bomber capability more or less at the

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\* WN(L)-9266-ARPA, Table 2, p. 15 (Secret).

\*\* Khrushchev, II, p. 40.

\*\*\* See source 102, p. 151; Interview, OSD Office of Historian (Secret).  


allied World War II level of performance. Perhaps more important for the nuclear era, it also provided the LRA with a means for acquiring training and experience in the operation of a long-range bomber force.

(5) The new Soviet leaders also inherited from Stalin three strategic bomber development programs, all of which had probably been initiated around the turn of the decade. Furthest along was the TU-16 (BADGER), a swept-wing twin-jet subsonic medium bomber, designed by A. N. Tupolev, presumably as a jet follow-on to the BULL. The BADGER entered production in 1953 and by early 1954 began replacing the BULL in the operational force.\*

(6) In addition, there were two heavy bombers, evidently competing designs under simultaneous development in the tradition of Soviet aircraft development programs. One, also a Tupolev design, was a swept-wing four-engine heavy turboprop bomber. The first TU-95 (BEAR) prototype was completed in 1953; the aircraft was displayed at the 1954 May Day fly-by over Moscow; and it began to enter the operational force in 1956. The second, designed by V. M. Myasishchev, was a swept-wing four turbojet heavy bomber, the M-4 (BISON). The M-4 prototype was also completed in 1953; the aircraft was displayed at the July 1955 Aviation Day fly-by; and, like the BEAR, it began to enter the operational force early in 1956.\*\*

(7) From the perspective of Western intelligence, the development programs for all three aircraft had been unexpectedly rapid and suggested that an urgent priority had been assigned to the programs to achieve early production. Western attention was focused on the BEAR and BISON, the Soviet Union's first intercontinental nuclear delivery systems. The public display of these bombers in 1954-1955 had come some two years in advance of the estimated schedule. U.S. intelligence sources estimated a monthly production capacity of 15-20 aircraft, and

\* DIA Fact Book, 1968, p. 3-49 (Secret).

\*\* Ibid., pp. 3-45, 3-47 (Secret).

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a force of some 600 to 700 of these heavy Soviet bombers was projected by the end of the 1950s, considerably in excess of the then programmed B-52 force.\* It was on the basis of such estimates that the "bomber gap" debate erupted in the United States in the mid-1950s.

(U) The single event most responsible for sparking the "bomber gap" furore in the West was the fly-by of BISONS at the Moscow Aviation Day show in July 1955 in numbers that, according to then CIA director, Allen Dulles, "far exceeded what was thought to be available." The display was apparently deliberately misleading since, again according to Dulles, it was later surmised that same squadron of BISONS had been flying around in circles, reappearing every few minutes.\*\* If so, Soviet exploitation of the impression created by the fly-by was curious, for it received little support in Soviet military claims. The demonstration had not been preceded by authoritative boasts of a Soviet bomber capability against the United States, and such claims were rare afterward. More often than not, Soviet claims during 1955-1957 to possess "reliable means for delivering atomic and hydrogen bombs to any point on earth"\*\*\* either failed to specify those means or referred to "rockets" rather than bombers.\*\*\*\* Possible Soviet reasons for preferring to emphasize long-range missiles rather than bombers in public claims are discussed below (see p. ); but the great political success achieved by the July, 1955 BISON fly-by, even in the absence of Soviet efforts to follow up with extravagant claims and new demonstrations, evidently persuaded Soviet leaders that U.S. intelligence services tended to exaggerate the USSR's strategic capabilities and that American military leaders and political circles, particularly the opposition party of the day, were inclined

\* Ermarth and Wolfe, p. ) (Secret). An earlier effort by Tupolev to produce a very large piston-engined bomber (the TU-85) had been abandoned, reportedly because it fell short of range requirements. The fuselage of the TU-95 may have been derived from the cancelled TU-85. (Air Enthusiast, September 1971, pp. 216-217.)

\*\* Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence*, p. 149

\*\*\* See, for example, Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky, *Pravda*, February 23, 1956.

\*\*\*\* Marshal Zhukov's speech at the XX CPSU Congress in February 1956 (*Pravda*, February 20, 1956).

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toward pessimism in estimating the strategic balance. These lessons were later put to use in spectacular fashion by Khrushchev when the USSR began to demonstrate its ICBM and related space capabilities.

~~(S)~~ Procurement decisions on these new heavy bombers presumably had to be made not long after Stalin's successors took power. A decision to procure large numbers of BAUGR medium bombers had probably been made earlier, since they were in production in 1953, entered the operational force the following year, and were deployed thereafter at an average rate of approximately 200 per year through the end of the decade.\* The new Soviet leadership was confronted at the time by a rapidly growing U.S. strategic bomber threat. Procurements of the B-47, the new American medium jet bomber which entered SAC in 1951, had been substantially increased and the operational capability of the force was being improved by provision of tanker support and overseas bases. The heavy B-52 entered production by late summer 1954 and the first units went into operational service in June 1955.\*\* While these U.S. strategic offensive developments did cause the Soviet leaders to intensify still further their efforts in strategic air defense, they made no effort to match the growing U.S. strategic bomber capability by acquiring large numbers of the new intercontinental bombers that had become available to them. Contrary to U.S. expectations, only a fraction of the BEAR and BISON heavy bombers that the Soviet Union was estimated to be capable of producing were procured and deployed.

~~(S)~~ Some 20 BEARS and 25 BISONS entered the Soviet operational force in 1956, but their numbers thereafter increased very slowly at an average combined rate of about 20 per year to 1965, when an estimated 205 heavy bombers were in the force (including BEARS assigned to Soviet Naval Aviation). The average annual increment to operational Soviet force was approximately equal to the monthly production capacity attributed to the USSR by the U.S. intelligence

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\* WN(L)-9266-ARPA; Table 2, p. 15 (Secret).

\*\* Ermarth and Wolfe, p. 44 (Secret).

community in the mid-1950s. By contrast, a total of some 1800 BADGERS was produced as replacements for BULLs in the LRA, and, after 1956, for deployment with SNA. (By 1964, there were 875 BADGERS in the LRA and 400 in SNA). \*

(S) The broad dimensions of the mix between new medium and heavy bombers may already have been determined in favor of the BADGERS while Stalin lived by earlier long lead-time decisions on the assignment and tooling of plants to produce the various aircraft. One plant each had been designated for the BEAR and BISON, while BADGER production went forward in three different plants. \*\* While these decisions may have predetermined the preeminence of BADGERS in the mix, the size of the ultimate production run on the heavy bombers is still believed to have fallen considerably short of production capacity. (For example, until the end of 1957, shortly after the first successful flight test of the Soviet ICBM and the launching of Sputnik I, BISON production had been proceeding at Plant No. 23 in Moscow at a growing annual rate on a two-shift basis, but then was cut back to a single-shift producing at less than the maximum rate for that shift. BEAR production is believed to have been discontinued in 1956, but was evidently resumed later for modified variants in limited numbers.) \*\*\*

(U) The decision to procure and deploy only modest numbers of heavy modern bombers delayed the acquisition of a sizeable Soviet intercontinental attack force for almost a decade and had an enduring impact on the structure and character of the Soviet strategic offensive force posture that later did emerge. Direct evidence bearing on the strategic rationale for that decision and on the political, economic and bureaucratic factors that may have shaped it, is scanty and of uncertain validity. But because the consequences of that decision were so far-reaching, even an admittedly conjectural effort to explain it seems mandatory.

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\*WN(L)-9266-ARPA, Table 2, pl 15 (Secret).

\*\* Source 103.

\*\*\* Interview material, OSD Office of Historian (Secret).

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(U) Retrospective Soviet explanations treat the failure of the USSR to acquire a large force of heavy bombers as the outcome of a conscious and deliberate strategic decision, taken at the highest Party and government levels, to leapfrog the bomber phase of intercontinental nuclear delivery development, and to concentrate instead on the development of strategic ballistic missiles. Bombers were said to be inherently inferior delivery means and represented at best an intermediate stage in the developing revolution in modern warfare which the Soviet leadership decided to skip over.

(U) "Under the leadership of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government, a thorough study of the outlook for the future development of combat weapons was used as the basis for the conclusion that the stage of nuclear air power in the development of the revolution in warfare was an intermediate one. On its tactical and operational capabilities, the aviation of that period would not have been able to ensure the effective use of nuclear weapons. A certain gap developed between the unlimited capabilities of nuclear devices and the relatively low capabilities of their delivery to the target (owing primarily to their vulnerability to anti-aircraft defenses). The old delivery systems had to be replaced by fundamentally new means of delivery of nuclear weapons. Missiles became these means."\*

(U) This strategic rationale is consistent with a series of public statements made by Khrushchev after the first successful Soviet ICBM test in 1957, which emphasized the inherent superiority of strategic missiles over bomber aircraft, as well as with his more detailed account of Soviet bomber and missile programs of the 1950s in his reminiscences. In his tape-recorded memoirs, Khrushchev makes the following arguments to support the leadership's decisions to avoid substantial reliance on bombers for the intercontinental nuclear offensive mission, and to bank instead on the development of strategic missiles:\*\*

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\* Lt. Vol. C. V. Bondarenko, "KVS, No. 24, December 1968, p. 26.

\*\* Khrushchev, II, p. 43.

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1. For military and technical reasons, the life span of even the best aircraft is necessarily short and their rapid obsolescence would have imposed enormous and continuing modernization costs. (By contrast, in another context, Khrushchev argues that ICBMs have a long useful system-life and implies that the improvements achieved through modernization programs undertaken by his successors were economically unjustified.)\*

2. The inherent speed limitations of manned aircraft make them vulnerable to modern air defense systems.

3. The range requirements set by Soviet military planners for intercontinental bombers "were beyond the reach of our technological capability."

4. "We realized that if we were to deter our adversaries from unleashing nuclear war against us, we needed to have some means more reliable than bombers of delivering our bombs to their targets. In short, we needed to develop guided missiles."

(U) Khrushchev's preference in principle for missiles over bombers was probably reinforced by his strong proclivity toward "oneupmanship" in the rhetoric of international power politics, a proclivity which he freely and expansively indulged during his last seven years in office. It is not surprising that when he entered the arena of strategic nuclear claims, so long monopolized by the United States, Khrushchev preferred to make the Soviet Union's case on the strength of radically new strategic missiles in which, while they were still only under development, the Soviet Union enjoyed a generally acknowledged lead, rather than strategic bombers, which were no longer novel weapons and in which the lead of the United States was overwhelming.

(U) Khrushchev's marked bias against strategic bombers may well have been shared in some measure by most members of the Soviet High Command. The Soviet military establishment of the mid-1950s lacked either a strong doctrinal commitment to or extensive wartime operational experience with strategic bombing. A political leader with Stalin's power, holding strong views about the effectiveness of strategic air power, could have overridden the lack of doctrinal or bureaucratic

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\*Unpublished transcript of Khrushchev tapes.

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support for it within the military establishment (as he did in the case of naval power), but there was no such dominating political figure in the mid-1950s, and the biases of the ascending leader, Khrushchev, were strongly in the opposite direction.\* Missiles were probably more congenial to the ground-force oriented Soviet High Command which could, and evidently did, assimilate them in doctrinal and operational terms as extensions of artillery. While it may be assumed that the Soviet Air Staff would have preferred larger procurements of heavy bombers than were authorized, their disappointment was probably offset to some degree by the expectation that the strategic missiles to be acquired in lieu of bombers, would be under their command, as indeed they were until 1959. There is no evidence that the replacement of Marshal of Aviation Zhigarev as CINC, Soviet Air Force, by Marshal K. A. Vershinin early in 1957 reflected any Kuznetsov-like opposition by the former to the leadership's decision to build only a modest intercontinental bomber force. Zhigarev was named director of Aeroflot and presided over the very rapid build-up of the Soviet civilian air line which followed, in large part through the conversion of Tupolev's TU-16 and TU-95 into commercial passenger aircraft (the TU-104 and TU-114).

(U) However, the leapfrog rationale does not explain why the Soviet leadership's conclusions about the imminent demise of manned bomber aircraft and the inherent superiority of strategic missiles did not lead to a curtailment of the BADGER program, or at least to a sharp cutback in procurement when the heavy bomber decisions were made. Most of the broad objections to manned bombers applied to medium as well as heavy

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\* (U) Would Stalin have made the same decisions on BISON and BEAR procurement that his successors did? Probably not. Khrushchev tells us that Stalin was driven by a desire to acquire some early capability to hit the United States with nuclear weapons. Soviet bomber development programs of the late 1940s and early 1950s had Stalin's full weight behind them. If he was prepared to procure vast numbers of TU-4s rather than wait for a new generation of jet bombers, he may also have been unwilling to settle for a modest force of BISONS and BEARS while waiting for ICBMs. Judging from the image of Stalin projected by Khrushchev, the former was both too fearful and too conservative to have accepted delay.

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bombers (rapid obsolescence, vulnerability to air defense). Moreover, the development of medium-range ballistic missiles was well advanced at the time the mid-50s bomber procurement decisions were made, and the leadership probably had confident grounds for projecting a sizeable MRBM operational force before the end of the decade. By contrast, the ICBM program that was to produce the SS-6 was still in a comparatively early stage of development: the first successful flight test was not to occur until August 1957 and, according to Khrushchev, it was preceded by several failures.\*

(U) These anomalies suggest that the disproportionately small procurements of heavy bombers may have been influenced not only, or even primarily, by broad conclusions about the inherent limitations of manned bombers as strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, but by technical characteristics of the particular bombers in hand. The BADGER clearly satisfied the technical requirements for a medium bomber operating against peripheral targets more fully than the BISON and BEAR satisfied requirements for a heavy bomber intended for employment against targets in the continental United States. The larger BADGER force procured provided the Soviet Union with substantial operational capabilities against overseas SAC bases, on which the U.S. was still heavily dependent in the mid-1950s, and dramatically enhanced the USSR's capacity to hold Europe hostage.

(U) By contrast, Khrushchev states explicitly that the BISON "failed to satisfy our requirements,"\*\* and that the BEAR "failed to meet the Air Force's specifications."\*\*\* According to Khrushchev's account, both for him and for Stalin, an acceptable strategic bomber for use against U.S. targets had to be capable of two-way missions, presumably without in-flight refueling, which he never mentions, and

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\* Khrushchev, II, p. 46.

\*\* Ibid., p. 39.

\*\*\* Ibid., p. 40.

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which was, in any case, not available to the LRA in the mid-1950s. The BISON, according to Khrushchev, failed among other things to satisfy range requirements. Khrushchev specifically excludes as unacceptable one and one-quarter missions, as proposed by Myasishchev to cover his bomber's range deficiencies.

The Mya-4 failed to satisfy our requirements. It could reach the United States, but it couldn't come back. Myasishchev said the Mya-4 could bomb the United States and land in Mexico.

We replied to that idea with a joke: "What do you think Mexico is--our mother-in-law? You think we can simply go calling any time we want?" The Mexicans would never let us have the plane back."\*

(U) As for the BEAR, which Khrushchev admits had "excellent" range (which he recollects as 12,000 kilometers, a low estimate), he says that because of its low cruising speed and maximum altitude (which he recalls more or less correctly) "it would be shot down long before it got anywhere near its target. Therefore, it couldn't be used as a strategic bomber."\*\*

(U) It is possible that an additional consideration bearing on the decision to produce only limited numbers of BISONS and BEARS was the expectation that a technically superior second-generation heavy bomber might soon be developed. Around 1958, a new Myasishchev-designed delta-winged jet bomber, the M-50 (BOUNDER) was under development. A prototype appeared over Tushino in 1961, but, in the end, it proved to be an unsuccessful design, and was cancelled.\*\*\*

(U) The official Soviet leapfrog rationale is in any case misleading because the procurement decisions made for the BEAR and BISON heavy bombers were not as bold as that rationale implies and the force

\* Khrushchev, II. p. 39.

\*\* Ibid., p. 40.

\*\*\* Alexander, source.

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actually acquired does not justify Khrushchev's virtually total discounting of the Soviet Union's intercontinental manned bomber capability. Foregoing any procurement at all would have left the Soviet Union without an intercontinental delivery system of any kind through the end of the decade, and this was a risk which the leadership was evidently unwilling to run.

(U) The choice actually made has all the earmarks of a compromise reflecting competing strategic priorities and preferences and technologically uneven capabilities for meeting them. For Khrushchev and others in the leadership skeptical on general grounds about the military and political utility of heavy bombers for the Soviet Union, the modest procurement program adopted may have been justified as providing a non-negligible, even if technically marginal, interim capability for attacking the United States, while ICBMs and SLBMs were being developed, and as insurance against failures or delays in the long-range missile programs.

(U) Given the technical limitations of the heavy bombers available, basing and operational problems associated with their employment for intercontinental attack missions, and the limited stockpile of nuclear weapons available at the time, a force twice or three times as large may not have been perceived as buying a commensurate doubling or trebling of real capability. Moreover since U.S. estimators remained uncertain about the magnitude of Soviet heavy bomber production programs at least until 1957, the Soviet Union probably got as much political mileage out of the modest heavy bomber force it actually deployed as it might have from a much larger force. By then, Soviet flight-testing of an ICBM and related space launches had diverted U.S. attention to what was believed to be an imminent and substantial Soviet ICBM threat.

(U) Whatever the strategic and technical calculations that underlay the Soviet heavy bomber decisions of the mid-1950s, they are difficult to reconcile with the rapidly growing U.S. strategic offensive threat that confronted the Soviet leaders in the mid-1950s without making some assumptions about Soviet threat perceptions. By

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1955, the new Soviet leaders had accumulated several years of experience in dealing with the United States and its NATO allies. At some point after deposing Malenkov from the premiership early in 1955, Khrushchev, judging from his contemporary public utterances as well as from his retrospective memoirs, evidently reduced his estimates of the threat to Soviet security posed by superior U.S. strategic power, for the foreign and military policies that evolved under his leadership were to be grounded in the assumption that the mere existence of such superiority did not gravely threaten the Soviet Union. The Geneva Summit Conference of July 1955 buoyed his self-confidence: "We had established ourselves as able to hold our own in the international arena." His face-to-face meeting with the leaders of the West may have reassured him that they were not fundamentally bellicose ("Eisenhower was a good man, but he wasn't very tough. There was something soft about his character")\*, or at least prudent ("Dulles knew how far he could push us and never pushed us too far...he never stepped over that brink which he was always talking about in his speeches....").\*\* Moreover, the warm enthusiasm that the summit meeting generated throughout the non-Communist world ("spirit of Geneva") probably added to Khrushchev's confidence that, when necessary, he could quickly change the international atmosphere and relax tensions by offering the West small concessions or even by merely hinting that he might be prepared to do so. A year later the failure of the United States to intervene in Hungary was probably taken by the Soviet leaders as decisive confirmation that the West meant to employ its strategic preponderance only defensively and would not make it the basis for a far-reaching military or political offensive against the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Suez crisis demonstrated that the emerging Soviet strategic capability, though

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\* Khrushchev, I, p. 397.

\* Ibid., p. 398.

still far inferior to that of the United States, could be fashioned into a potent instrument of Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet attempt to intimidate Britain and France by alluding to the possibility of a rocket attack against them proved to be the forerunner of a series of more direct efforts by Khrushchev to exploit Soviet strategic power politically in the later years.

3. Decision to deploy only a token force of first-generation ICBMs

(S) Development of the first Soviet ICBM, the SS-6, was the out-growth of work based on German rocket technology that was begun after World War II at the NII-88 design bureau located in Kaliningrad (Moscow oblast). Employing designs derived from German V-2 technology and utilizing cryogenic fuels and radio-assisted guidance, a team headed by Chief Designer S. P. Korolev developed a series of short-range rockets (SS1A (150 n.m.), SS-2 (300 n.m.), and SS-3 (630 n.m.)) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and then moved on to ICBM development.\*

(S) Evidence for reconstructing the early milestones of the first Soviet ICBM program is scanty and for the most part dates must be inferred from what later became observable. In his memoirs, Khrushchev states that Korolev's work on the ICBM (called the *Semyorka*, or No. 7) was initiated after Stalin's death (March 1953).\*\* If true, this suggests that Korolev began to concentrate on ICBM development only after the initial flight test early in 1953 of his SS-3, a missile of 630-mile range from which certain design features of the SS-6 ICBM were derived. But it is more likely that Khrushchev's dating refers to his own first awareness of Korolev's work on the ICBM \*\*\* than to actual initiation of the program, which probably occurred earlier, perhaps concurrently with advanced phases of Korolev's work

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\* AF Supporting Studies.

\*\* Khrushchev II, p. 45.

\*\*\* (U) Khrushchev asserts that he and Stalin's other Politburo lieutenants were poorly informed about Soviet advanced weapons development while Stalin lived. They sometimes attended meetings where these matters were discussed, "but we weren't allowed to ask questions. Therefore, when Stalin died we were poorly prepared to carry the burden which fell on our shoulders...we were technological ignoramuses." Khrushchev, II, pp. 45-46.

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on the SS-3. In any case, the ICBM program was still in an early stage of development when Stalin died. According to [redacted]

[redacted] a design solution for the clustered propulsion unit of the SS-6 was achieved by Korolev and A. Isaev only in 1954.\* ICBM test range construction at both the launch complex at Tyuratam and the impact area in Kamchatka Peninsula is believed to have been started in mid-1955. Despite what Khrushchev calls the leadership's "absolute confidence" in Korolev,\*\* it is unlike that at that early date, when the limited heavy bomber procurement decisions were probably made, that there could have been high confidence about imminent early success for the ICBM program. Khrushchev recalls that the *Semyorka* blew up on its first test-firing, and that there may have been "several unpleasant incidents," with missiles exploding on the pad or during liftoff.\*\*\* It was probably only after the first successful test-firing of the SS-6 in August 1957 that a reasonably confident basis existed for projecting deployment of the new missile.

~~As~~ On August 26, 1957, the official Soviet news agency, Tass, announced that "a super-long-range multi-stage intercontinental ballistic rocket" had been successfully tested and the results indicated "it is now possible to send missiles to any part of the world."\*\*\*\* A second Soviet ICBM firing on September 7, 1957, was later disclosed to the French political leader, Daladier, by Khrushchev,

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\* Leonid Valdimirov, *The Russian Space Bluff*, p. 77, cited in Ermarth and Wolfe, p. 46.

\*\* "We had absolute confidence in Comrade Korolev. We believed him when he told us that his rocket would not only fly, but that it would travel 7,000 kilometers." Khrushchev, II, p. 46.

\*\*\* Khrushchev, II. p. 46.

\*\*\*\* *Pravda*, August 27, 1957.

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who claimed he had personally witnessed the launching.\* The ICBM tests were followed on October 4 by Soviet launching of the world's first artificial earth satellite. A second satellite launching occurred in November and a third the following May. Each satellite was said to have been heavier than its predecessor and all were said to have employed the Soviet ICBM as a booster.

(S) There is some evidence that initial Soviet deployment plans for the SS-6 called for a larger force than the handful that were eventually deployed. It is fairly well-established that around mid-1957 construction of launch sites began at least at two locations. There is a possibility that construction was also started at two to four others, which later became sites for the second generation SS-7 Soviet ICBM, but this is contentious. It is generally agreed that sometime around mid-1958 a firm decision was made to limit deployment of the SS-6 to a single site at Plesetsk in the northwest corner of the Soviet Union. At that time, after eight SS-6s had been flown, testing was apparently suspended for some nine months, a hiatus that suggested the program had run into difficulties.\* In late 1958, site construction at a location in the far north was abandoned, implying there had been some cutback in the program. But the extent of the deployment that may originally have been planned is unclear, in part because of uncertainties about how many additional starts on launch sites for the SS-6 had been made, and whether any others had been planned. In the end, deployment was limited to four launchers at the single site at Plesetsk, which became operational in 1960. Testing of the SS-6 was resumed early in 1959 and production continued, but the missiles were diverted principally to the space program for which variants of the SS-6 booster became the principal launch vehicles. In a technical sense, Khrushchev's claim early in 1959 that the Soviet ICBM had entered "serial production" may have been correct.

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\* Air Technical Intelligence Center, *Soviet Offensive Guided Missile Capabilities* (U), TASK NR. 616101, April 15, 1959, p. 32 (S).

\*\* Arnold Horelick and Myron Rush, *Deception in Soviet Strategic Missile Claims, 1957-1962* (U), The Rand Corporation, R-407-PR, May 1963, pp. 14-15 (S).

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(S) While the long hiatus in SS-6 test-firings beginning around mid-1958 may have signified difficulties in the program that slowed it down, it is doubtful that a very much larger deployment program was projected earlier. Most of the serious deficiencies of the SS-6 as an operational ICBM were inherent in its design and must have been evident at an early stage. The SS-6 was a huge and cumbersome missile, with gross weight estimated at over 550,000 pounds and it used non-storeable liquid fuel, posing severe ground-handling and readiness problems. The original versions, built to carry a heavy 15,000 pound warhead, was estimated to have a range of less than 5,000 n.m., which required deployment in the inhospitable extreme far north in order to secure reasonable target coverage.\* The clumsy configuration of the SS-6, a 1-1/2-stage vehicle, utilizing parallel staging of four booster engines, required that it be transported in one piece by rail all the way to the launch pad, thus restricting deployment to rail-served locations and increasing the probability of detection (once this constraint became known to the opponent).

(U) Khrushchev had meanwhile become deeply engaged in the details of the Soviet ICBM and space programs. His reminiscences appear to confirm many of the estimates of the U.S. intelligence community about the inherent design and technical deficiencies of the SS-6 as an ICBM. While Khrushchev praises the *Semyorka* for achieving a major scientific and military breakthrough for the USSR, he says that "launching Sputniks into space didn't solve the problem of how to defend our country."\*\* "Properly speaking, the *Semyorka* was not a military rocket."\*\*\*

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\* (S) DIA Fact Book, p. , Khrushchev states (II, p. 46) that Korolev promised to produce a missile that would fly 7,000 kilometers (approximately 3400 n.m.), a range considerably shorter than U.S. intelligence estimates for the early SS-6; from Plesetsk, an ICBM with that range could hit only the extreme northeast corner of the United States. Khrushchev's recollection, though repeated (II, p. 48), may be wrong; or else Korolev may have been referring to the distance from the Tyuratam launch site to the Kamchatka impact area, which is almost exactly 7,000 kilometers.

\*\* Khrushchev, II, p. 47.

\*\*\* Unpublished transcript of Khrushchev tapes.

I remember that in the first days of the *Semyorka* program,... we could direct it to a target only by placing guidance systems every 500 kilometers along the way.... My conversations with Comrade Korolyov also made me worry that the enemy might be able to destroy our *Semyorka* before we could get it in the air. The rocket was fired from a launching pad which looked like a huge tabletop and could easily be detected by reconnaissance planes or satellites....

There was also the length of time required to prepare a rocket for launching. (Korolev informed Khrushchev there was no way that the SS-6 could be "put at constant readiness, so that it [could] be fired at a moment's notice in the event of a crisis.")

Therefore, the *Semyorka* was reliable neither as a defensive nor as an offensive weapon. Regardless of its range, it represented only a symbolic counterthreat to the United States. That left us only France, West Germany, and other European countries in striking distance of our medium-range missiles.\*

*105* Precisely for symbolic reasons, as well, perhaps, as for ICBM operational and training experience, a token deployment made sense. Given the basic design characteristics of the SS-6, it is difficult to see what could have been believed about the system before mid-1958 that would then have made it seem to be suitable for extensive deployment. If anything, the improved lighter reentry vehicle that later became available may have made the SS-6 somewhat more attractive by increasing its range and making it suitable for deployment deeper in the Soviet interior. Moreover, large increases in programmed U.S. Atlas and Titan ICBM programs during and after 1958, spurred by evidence of Soviet progress, would only have tended to encourage larger rather than smaller deployments. The weight of the evidence appears to be that while there may have been a decision in 1958 to restrict the SS-6 to token deployment, a large-scale deployment program had never been planned.

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\*Khrushchev, II, pp. 48-50.

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(8) Large increases in the programmed U.S. IRBM force may, however, have caused the Soviets to expand their own programs for deploying two new missiles, an MRBM and an IRBM, that were being developed in the mid-1950s by another design team, headed by M. K. Yangel, which had evidently split off from NII-88 and established itself as a separate entity in Dnepropetrovsk. According to Khrushchev, the Korolev design bureau after developing the SS-6 "was concerned mostly with developing rocketry for the exploration of space" and "the burden of developing military missiles fell on [Yangel's] shoulders."<sup>\*</sup> While Korolev's bureau based its designs on V-2 technology, Yangel's group exploited technologies associated with the German "Wasserfall" rocket. Yangel's rockets utilized storable liquid propellants and inertial guidance systems. Khrushchev refers to Yangel as working on "a quick-firing rocket engine."<sup>\*\*</sup> Test firings with the SS-4, a 1000 n.m. MRBM designed by Yangel's team commenced in 1957 and IOC was achieved the following year. Between 1958 and 1964 over 500 SS-4s were deployed. Right behind the SS-4 was a Yangel-designed IRBM, the SS-5, with a 2000 n.m. range that could cover all U.S. peripheral bases in the European land mass. Between 1960 and 1964, over 100 SS-5s were deployed.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

(8) On the strength of Yangel's success with designing operational MRBMs and IRBMs, the Soviet leaders, in deciding not to deploy Korolev's SS-6 in operationally significant numbers, were presumably looking ahead to the early availability of a second-generation ICBM, one of which, the SS-7, Yangel had under development. The SS-7 was a two-stage tandem missile, which, unlike the SS-6, utilized storable liquid propellants and an all-inertial guidance system. Improvements in Soviet warhead technology since the mid-1950s when the SS-6 was designed, made it possible substantially to reduce the weight of

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\* Khrushchev, II, p. 50.

\*\* Ibid., p. 51.

\*\*\* WN(L)-9266-ARPA, Table 2, p. 15 (Secret).

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reentry vehicles for second-generation ICBMs. The SS-7 was designed to deliver a 3500-pound reentry vehicle to a maximum range of 6500-7000 n.m., and a heavier 4200-pound reentry vehicle to a 6000 n.m. range. The SS-7 was a large missile, but considerably smaller than the SS-6 (325,000 vs. 550,000 pounds).\*

(S) Paralleling Yangel's work on the SS-7, Korolev's bureau was developing a second-generation follow-on to the SS-6, later designated as the SS-8. Like the SS-6, the new missile utilized cryogenic propellants and radio-inertial guidance, but it was much smaller (165,000 pounds) and its two-stage tandem configuration promised to reduce many of the transportation, basing, and ground-handling problems associated with the SS-6. The SS-7 and SS-8 may have been competing designs, or the latter, employing proven, but operationally inferior ICBM technology, may have been regarded as a back-up for the newer system, insuring against failure to scale it up to ICBM dimensions. The two systems were moving along in development at roughly the same rate and both were test-fired in the spring of 1961.\*\* In the end, both were deployed, but the SS-7 in far greater numbers. (See Part Two, below.)

(U) Soviet missile procurement decisions of the late 1950s were analogous in some striking respects to the bomber decisions made in the middle of the decade. In both cases, first-generation intercontinental nuclear delivery systems, developed at great cost in the face of an opponent with vastly superior and rapidly growing means of attacking the USSR, were deployed in numbers that fell far short of Soviet production capacity, while peripheral attack systems, employing related technologies, were procured in very large numbers. The BADGERS, as well as the SS-4 MREMs and the SS-5 IRBMs, were evidently regarded as technically suitable to carry out their assigned missions and were retained as mainstays of the Soviet

\* DIA Fact Book, pp. (Secret).

\*\* Ibid., pp. (Secret).

peripheral attack force for many years. The BEAR and BISON heavy bombers, only marginally effective as intercontinental delivery systems, were procured only in modest numbers, in anticipation of the development of ICBMs; the first-generation Soviet ICBM, which was even less suitable operationally than the heavy bombers, was deployed in mere token strength, in anticipation of the development of second-generation ICBM systems. But the difference between the modest deployment of the BISON and BEAR and the token deployment of the SS-6 is significant. Had the Soviets literally leapfrogged the heavy bomber phase, as the Soviet literature implies they did, then foregoing more than token deployment of the SS-6 might have seemed too risky, even given the blatant deficiencies of that missile. To the extent that the modest heavy bomber deployment was regarded as insurance against delays in fielding a substantial ICBM force, it paid off, for it helped to cover the Soviet Union's nakedness in strategic offensive forces until second-generation ICBM deployments began on a substantial scale in 1962.

(U) Politically, however, the Soviet leadership's willingness to accept a long delay in acquisition of a substantial ICBM capability was covered not by directing the West's attention to the Soviet bomber force in hand, but by concealing the fact that a decision had been made virtually to leapfrog deployment of first-generation ICBMs. Early Soviet ICBM claims during the first year after the initial test-firing of the SS-6 had stressed that the Soviet Union had "solved the problem" of creating ICBMs and focused on the broad strategic implications of the new weapons in which the USSR enjoyed a generally acknowledged lead, without making explicit claims about the production or deployment status of the weapons. But the series of progressively more expansive claims about the operational capabilities of Soviet ICBMs that were made after the mid-1958 decision to deploy only token numbers were clearly calculated to achieve deceptive purposes. Beginning in late 1968, Khrushchev made a series of claims regarding production of the Soviet ICBM: first, that production had been "set up" (November 1958); next, that the ICBM was in "serial production" (January 1959), and finally, in January 1960, that it was in "mass

-production." These statements implied a transition from manufacture of individual prototype ICBMs to production of large numbers.\* In fact, the bulk of the vehicles that were being turned out were not ICBMs for military deployment, but boosters for the Soviet space program.

(S) As early as February 1959, Defense Minister Malinovsky, seconded by several other marshals of the Soviet Union, spoke of the Soviet armed forces as having been "equipped" with ICBMs; that was almost a full year before the USSR achieved a small IOC with the SS-6. In late 1959 and early 1960, when the Soviet Union had at most four SS-6 launchers deployed operationally, Khrushchev made a series of far-reaching claims implying the existence of a large operational ICBM capability. The Soviet Union, he announced, has "enough nuclear weapons...and the corresponding rockets to deliver this weapon to the territory of a possible aggressor...so that we could literally wipe from the face of the earth the country or countries that attacked us." Thus, the claimed capacity to destroy the NATO countries of Europe with missiles, which had long been asserted, was extended for the first time to include the USSR's chief opponent, the United States.

(U) Khrushchev's attempt to promote Western uncertainty about the existing and near-term Soviet strategic strength was understandable in the light of the long delay that he knew, at least by mid-1958, lay ahead before substantial numbers of ICBMs could be deployed. Given the glaring technical deficiencies of the SS-6, the huge costs that extensive deployment would have entailed for a system that might quickly have to be replaced, and the promise of better and cheaper ICBMs in the pipeline, an argument for extensive deployment on technical military or cost-effectiveness grounds would probably have been difficult to sustain. The SS-6 decision was taken at a time when Khrushchev was at the height of his political power, a year after his decisive defeat of the "anti-Party group." There was no longer

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\* See R-409-PR, *Passim*, for a detailed account on the evolution of Soviet ICBM claims from 1957 to 1962.

a Molotov in the Party Presidium to challenge Khrushchev's judgment that foregoing early ICBM deployment would not subject the Soviet Union to grave risks. The Defense Minister, Marshal Malinovsky, was Khrushchev's choice to replace Zhukov, and, even supposing that his views on SS-6 deployment differed from Khrushchev's, Malinovsky lacked the prestige and great authority that Zhukov might have been able to bring to bear had he remained in office. When the decision was made, there was as yet no separate branch of service controlling strategic missiles and MRBM deployment had only just begun. For the Soviet Air Force, to which the first operational MRBMs were assigned, missiles were still but a side-show. The SAF probably lacked both the strong incentives and the organizational clout necessary to affect the SS-6 deployment decision substantially. Khrushchev's memoirs do reflect some friction with the Soviet military over the Soviet Union's early missile programs, but invariably show his protagonists as conservatives, skeptical about the utility of the new weapons and championing the cause of the old.\* It is unlikely that the creator of the SS-6, Korolev, lobbied hard for a large deployment. According to Khrushchev, Korolev acknowledged the limitations of the SS-6 as a military rocket, had turned his energies primarily to the space program, and was in any case authorized to work on a second-generation ICBM, which kept his bureau in the military business. Curtailment of the SS-6 program probably pleased Korolev's competitors, the design team led by Yangel, for it provided them with the opportunity for achieving preeminence in the ICBM field.

(U) Nor was it likely that Khrushchev's effort to conceal the decision to delay the fielding of a substantial Soviet ICBM force was opposed by his political or military associates, some of whom collaborated actively in the deception. (But Khrushchev's disclosure that he was the true author of the first authoritative article on the strategic implications of the ICBM that appeared in *Pravda*

\* According to Khrushchev, even Chief Marshal of Artillery S. S. Varentsov, who commanded tactical rocket units of the Soviet Army from 1961 to 1963, resisted the introduction of tactical missiles and insisted on the superiority of conventional artillery (Khrushchev, II, p. 52).

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(September 8, 1957) under Marshal Vershinin's signature, suggests that their collaboration may not have been entirely spontaneous.) \*

(U) However, the expansiveness of Khrushchev's ICBM claims and strategic threats associated with them were grossly out of proportion to what was required merely to conceal from the West that deployment of substantial numbers of Soviet ICBMs would be delayed. With respect to the strategic balance that actually emerged in the early 1960s, Khrushchev's claims were extremely counter-productive, since they provoked a massive U.S. ICBM and SLBM build-up, almost certainly larger than what would have been authorized in the absence of inflated or premature estimates of the Soviet ICBM program.

~~(S)~~ It seems clear in the light of Khrushchev's foreign policy after 1958, that his deceptive missile claims were intended not only to conceal Soviet weakness, a not unreasonable defensive tactic under the circumstances, but also to provide him with a new psychological instrument for conducting a broad political offensive in Europe centered on West Berlin, (in Khrushchev's colorful phrase "the sore blister on...the American foot in Europe"). \*\* Deception in missile claims was wedded by Khrushchev to bluff in foreign policy in a strategy designed to elicit major concessions from the West. [REDACTED] (S)(1) C

[REDACTED] private sentiment in high Soviet military circles was that Khrushchev was taking "a big risk" in the renewed Berlin crisis that might involve the Soviet Union in a war it was not ready to fight. \*\*\* The views of Khrushchev's political associates in the Presidium about their leader's attempt to shake the allies out of Berlin by rattling non-existent missiles are not known, but when, a few years after his fall they acquired the strategic substance which Khrushchev only pretended to have at his disposal, they adopted a

\* R-405, PR, p.1.

\*\* Khrushchev II, p. 501.

\*\*\* Wolfe-Ermarth, p. 59 (Secret).

radically different and far less risky strategy for dealing with the same set of issues that Khrushchev had attempted to resolve by bluff and bluster.

(U) In his confidence that his opponents would not resort to force unless attacked or gravely provoked, Khrushchev was vindicated; he never deviated from his determination not to offer grave provocation and to retreat if the situation created by his threats or actions seemed to be escaping his control.\* But Khrushchev miscalculated badly in his assumption that his opponents could be coerced into making the large concessions he sought by the measures he was willing to take.

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\* As Khrushchev put it: "We always seek to direct the development of events so as...not [to] provide the imperialist provocateurs with a chance to unleash a world war." (*Pravda*, January 19, 1961.)

CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION MARCH 1953	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION JULY 1955	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION FEB 1956	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION JULY 1957	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION SEPT 1959
<p>Malekov, G. N. Molotov, V. M. Mikoyan, A. I. Vereshchilov, K. Ye. Khrushchev, N. S. Bulgaria, N. A. Bogdanovich, L. N. Sakurov, N. Z. Perovskia, N. G. Bogacheva, L. P. (elected 7/1953)</p>	<p>Malenkov, G. M. Molotov, V. M. Mikoyan, A. I. Vereshchilov, K. Ye. Khrushchev, N. S. Bulgaria, N. A. Bogdanovich, L. N. Sakurov, N. Z. Perovskia, N. G. Kirichenko, A. I. Sudiov, M. A.</p>	<p>-Malekov, G. M. (expelled 6/1957) -Molotov, V. M. (expelled 6/1957) -Mikoyan, A. I. -Vereshchilov, K. Ye. -Khrushchev, N. S. -Bulgaria, N. A. -Bogdanovich, L. N. (expelled 6/1957) -Sakurov, N. Z. (expelled 6/1957) -Perovskia, N. G. (removed 6/1957) -Kirichenko, A. I. -Sudiov, M. A.</p>	<p>Bresheev, L. I. Sel'yakov, N. I. Mikoyan, A. I. Vereshchilov, K. Ye. Khrushchev, N. S. Bulgaria, N. A. Zhukov, G. K. (excluded 11/1957) Aristov, A. B. Igratov, S. G. Kuznetsov, M. I. Sudiev, M. A. Koslov, F. B. Kuznetsov, O. V. Furtseva, Ye. A. Shvernik, N. N. Mukhiddinov, N. A. (12/1957)</p>	<p>Bresheev, L. I. Sel'yakov, N. I. Mikoyan, A. I. Vereshchilov, K. Ye. Khrushchev, N. S. Bulgaria, N. A. (removed 9/1959) Aristov, A. B. Igratov, S. G. Kuznetsov, M. I. Sudiev, M. A. Koslov, F. B. Kuznetsov, O. V. Furtseva, Ye. A. Shvernik, N. N. Mukhiddinov, N. A. (12/1957)</p>
<p>Shevernik, N. N. Ponomarenko, P. E. Mal'nikov, L. G. Bagirov, N. D.</p>	<p>Shevernik, N. N. Ponomarenko, P. E. Mal'nikov, L. G. Bagirov, N. D.</p>	<p>Shevernik, N. N. -Ponomarenko, P. E. (2/1956) -Mal'nikov, L. G. (2/1956) -Bagirov, N. D. (executed 5/1955) Bresheev, L. I. Zhukov, G. K. Mukhiddinov, N. A. Furtseva, Ye. A. Koslov, F. B. (2/1957) Shepilov, D. T.</p>	<p>-Shevernik, N. N. (promoted member) -Ponomarenko, P. E. -Korotchenko, D. S. -Kalinberdin, Ye. E. -Bresheev, L. I. (promoted member) -Zhukov, G. K. (promoted member) -Mukhiddinov, N. A. (promoted member 12/1957) -Furtseva, Ye. A. (promoted member) -Koslov, F. B. (promoted member) -Shepilov, D. T. (expelled 6/1957) -Kirilenko, A. P. -Mazurov, K. I. -Khavayandza, V. P. -Perovskia, N. G. -Koegzina, A. S.</p>	<p>Podgorny, N. V. (since 6/1954) Ponomarenko, P. E. Korotchenko, D. S. Kalinberdin, Ye. E. Polyanskiy, D. S. (since 6/1958)  Kirilenko, A. P. Mazurov, K. I. Khavayandza, V. P. Perovskia, N. G. Koegzina, A. S.</p>

new added  
new removed

IS: Officials of the Soviet Union 1917-1967, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Nutuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1969.

Prominent Personages in the USSR, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Nutuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1968.

Who Was Who in the USSR, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Nutuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1972.

Dictionary of Soviet Officials, Volume I: National Organizations, CIA, & 73-31, November 1973.

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Table I

## Presidium Members and Candidate Members of the CC CPSU, 1953-1972

PLENARY SESSION APR 1954	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION MAY 1960	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION OCT 1961	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION OCT 1962
.. L. .. L. L. L. Ye. X. S. .. A. (relieved 9/1955)  G. C. A. L.  A. R. .. V. G. A. .. N. .. N. A.	Breshnev, L. I. -Belyayev, N. I. (relieved 5/1960) -Kukoyan, A. I. -Voroshilov, K. Ye. (released at own request 7/1960) -Druzhinov, N. S. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. Arbatov, A. B. Ignatov, N. G. -Kirichenko, A. I. (relieved 5/1960) Sudlow, M. A. Koslov, F. A. Kuusinen, O. V. Furtsova, Ye. A. Shvernik, N. V. Nabitdinov, N. A. Kozygin, A. N.	Breshnev, L. I. Voronov, G. I. -Kukoyan, A. I. -Kirilenko, A. P. (6/1962) -Krushchev, N. S. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. -Arbatov, A. B. (10/1961) -Ignatov, N. G. (10/1961)  Sudlow, M. A. Koslov, F. A. Kuusinen, O. V. -Furtsova, Ye. A. (10/1961) Shvernik, N. V. -Nabitdinov, N. A. (10/1961) Kozygin, A. N.	Breshnev, L. I. Voronov, G. I. -Kukoyan, A. I. -Kirilenko, A. P. (since 4/1962) -Khrushchev, N. S. (relieved 10/1964) Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. -Shelest, P. Ye. (11/1964) -Shelest, P. Ye. (11/1964) -Sazurov, K. I. (3/1965) Sudlow, M. A. Koslov, F. A. -Kuusinen, O. V. (died in office 12/1963)  Shvernik, N. V. Kozygin, A. N.
.. G. (since 6/1958) .. S. D. S. Ye. E. .. B. S. (since 6/1958)  A. P. .. T. .. V. P. R. G. .. N.	-Podgorny, N. V. (promoted member 5/1960) Pospelev, P. N. Korotchenko, D. S. Kalinberzin, Ye. E. -Polyanskiy, D. S. (promoted member 5/1960) -Voronov, G. I. (1/1961) -Grishina, V. V. (1/1961)  Kirilenko, A. P. -Kukoyan, K. I. -Shavvadze, V. P. Pervukhin, N. G. -Kozygin, A. N. (promoted member 5/1960)	-Pospelev, P. N. (relieved 10/1961) -Korotchenko, D. S. (10/1961) -Kalinberzin, Ye. E. -Voronov, G. I. (promoted member 10/1961) Grishina, V. V. -Shcherbitskay, V. V. -Tefrovov, L. S. (11/1962) -Shelest, P. Ye. (12/63) -Kirilenko, A. P. (10/1961) -Kukoyan, K. I. -Shavvadze, V. P. -Pervukhin, N. G. (10/1961)	-Rashidov, Sh. R. -Satinov, D. P. (3/1965) -Gritsai, V. V. -Shcherbitskay, V. V. (relieved 12/1963) -Tefrovov, L. S. -Shelest, P. Ye. (promoted member 11/1964) -Ganichev, P. N. (11/1964) -Maturov, K. I. (promoted member 3/1965) -Shavvadze, V. P.

CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION APR 1966	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION APR 1968	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION NOV 1971	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION DEC 1972
Breshnev, L. I. Veronov, G. I. -Mikoyan, A. I. (4/1966) Kirilenko, A. P. Fel'she, A. Ya. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. Shelepin, A. N. Shelest, P. Ye. Masurov, K. I. Sudiov, N. A. -Korolev, F. R. (since 11/1966)	Breshnev, L. I. Veronov, G. I. Kirilenko, A. P. Fel'she, A. Ya. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. Shelepin, A. N. Shelest, P. Ye. Masurov, K. I. Sudiov, N. A.  -Shvernik, N. N. (since 6/1967)	Breshnev, L. I. Veronov, G. I. Kirilenko, A. P. Fel'she, A. Ya. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. Shelepin, A. N. Shelest, P. Ye. Masurov, K. I. Sudiov, N. A. -Grishev, V. V. (since 4/1971) -Shechernitskiy, V. V. (since 4/1971) -Kunayev, D. A. (since 4/1971) -Kulakov, F. D. (since 4/1972)	Breshnev, L. I. Veronov, G. I. Kirilenko, A. P. Fel'she, A. Ya. Podgorny, N. V. Polyanskiy, D. S. Shelepin, A. N. Shelest, P. Ye. Masurov, K. I. Sudiov, N. A. Grishev, V. V. Shechernitskiy, V. V. Kunayev, D. A. Kulakov, F. D.
Shvernik, N. N. Kosygin, A. N.	Kosygin, A. N.	Kosygin, A. N.	
Masharov, P. M. Kunayev, D. A. Andropov, Yu. V. (6/1967) Bashilov, Sh. R. Datinov, D. F. Grishev, V. V. -Shechernitskiy, V. V. (since 12/1965) -Tolstrov, L. S. (4/1966)  Danilev, P. N. Nahavandzze, V. P.	Masharov, P. M. Kunayev, D. A. Andropov, Yu. V. Bashilov, Sh. R. Datinov, D. F. Grishev, V. V. Shechernitskiy, V. V.  Danilev, P. N. Nahavandzze, V. P.	Masharov, P. M. -Kunayev, D. A. (promoted member 4/1971) Andropov, Yu. V. Bashilov, Sh. R. Datinov, D. F. -Grishev, V. V. (promoted member 4/1971) -Shechernitskiy, V. V. (promoted member 4/1971)	Masharov, P. M. Andropov, Yu. V. Bashilov, Sh. R. Datinov, D. F.  Danilev, P. N. -Nahavandzze, V. P. Solomantsev, N. S. -Fomenkov, B. N. (since 3/1972)

	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION MARCH 1953	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION JULY 1953	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION FEB 1956	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION JULY 1957	
SECRETARIAT	Mar 7, 1953	Mar 14, 1953			
	Aristov, A. B. Malenkov, G. M. Mikhaylov, N. A. Ignat'yev, S. D. Pegov, S. M. Sudiov, N. A. Khrushchev, N. S. Pospelov, P. N. Shatalin, N. N.	Khrushchev, N. S. Sudiov, M. A. Pospelov, P. N. Shatalin, N. N. Ignat'yev, S. D.	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Sudiov, M. A. Pospelov, P. N. Shatalin, N. N. (2/1956) Aristov, A. B. Belyayev, N. I. Shepilov, D. I.	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Sudiov, M. A. Pospelov, P. N. Shatalin, N. N. (2/1956) Aristov, A. B. Belyayev, N. I. Shepilov, D. I. (relieved 6/1956) Bresheev, L. I. Tutsova, Ya. A.	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Sudiov, M. A. Pospelov, P. N. Ignat'ev, N. G. (12/1957) Aristov, A. B. Belyayev, N. I. Brikshev, A. I. (12/1957) Bresheev, L. I. Tutsova, Ya. A. Khukhinaev, N. A. (12/1957) Sudakov, O. V. (since 6/1957)

+ Members added  
- Members removed

SOURCES: *Officials of the Soviet Union 1957-1967*, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1969.  
*Prominent Personalities in the USSR*, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1968.  
*Who Was Who in the USSR*, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, New Jersey, USA, 1972.  
*Directory of Soviet Officials, Volume I: National Organizations*, CIA, A 73-31, November 1973.

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Table II  
Secretariat Members of the CC CPSU, 1953-1972

CC	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION SEPT 1958	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION MAY 1960	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION OCT 1961	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION OCT 1964	
Sec.)	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Suslov, M. A. Popov, P. N. Ignatov, N. G. Aristov, A. S. -Selyakov, S. I. (released 11/1958) Akhremenko, A. I. Bresheev, L. I. Furtseva, Ye. A. Nikitidzev, N. A. Kuznetsov, Yu. V.	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Suslov, M. A. -Popov, P. N. (released 5/1960) -Ignatov, N. G. (released 5/1961) -Aristov, A. S. (released 5/1961) Kozlov, F. Z. -Akhremenko, A. I. (released 5/1960) -Bresheev, L. I. (released 7/1960) -Furtseva, Ye. A. (released 5/1960) Nikitidzev, N. A. Kuznetsov, Yu. V.	Khrushchev, N. S. (1st Sec.) Suslov, M. A. Denichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N. Il'ichev, L. F. Kozlov, F. Z. Spiridonov, I. V.  Shelepin, A. N. -Nikitidzev, N. A. (12/1961) Kuznetsov, Yu. V. Andropov, Yu. V. Rudakov, A. P. Titov, V. N. -Distinov, D. T. (3/1965) -Kulakov, Y. D. (9/1965) -Kapitonov, I. V. (12/1965) -Polyakov, V. I. (11/1966)	-Khrushchev, N. S. (relieved 10/1964) Suslov, M. A. Denichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N. Il'ichev, L. F. -Kozlov, F. Z. (released 11/1964) -Spiridonov, I. V. (released 4/1962) -Bresheev, L. I. (since 6/1962) Shelepin, A. N. -Podgoromy, N. V. (since 6/1963) -Kudinov, O. V. (died in office 12/1963) Andropov, Yu. V. Rudakov, A. P. Titov, V. N. -Distinov, D. T. (3/1965) -Kulakov, Y. D. (9/1965) -Kapitonov, I. V. (12/1965) -Polyakov, V. I. (11/1966)	Bukharin Dimitrov Ponomarev -Il'ichev  Brezhnev Shelepin Podgoromy -Kudinov Andropov -Rudakov Titov -Distinov -Kulakov -Kapitonov -Polyakov
1957)					
6/1957)					

SATY SESSION 1966	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION APR 1966	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION APR 1968	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION NOV 1971	CC CPSU PLENARY SESSION DEC 1972
released 10/1964)	Suslov, M. A. Demichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N. -Il'ichev, L. I. (released 3/1965)	Suslov, M. A. Demichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N.	Suslov, M. A. Demichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N.	Suslov, M. A. Demichev, P. N. Ponomarev, B. N.
need 12/1964) released 4/1962) ice 9/1963)	Breshnev, L. I. (Sec. Gen.) Shelepin, A. N. Podgorny, N. V.	Breshnev, L. I. (Sec. Gen.) -Shelepin, A. N. (released 9/1967) -Podgorny, N. V. (4/1966)	Breshnev, L. I. (Sec. Gen.)	Breshnev, L. I. (Sec. Gen.)
(need 6/1963) ad in office 12/1963)	Andropov, Yu. V. -Kudakov, A. F. (left in office 7/1966) -Titov, V. S. (9/1965) Ustinov, D. P. Kulakov, F. D. Kapitonov, I. V. Kirilenko, A. P. Solomentsev, M. S. (12/1966)	Ustinov, D. P. Kulakov, F. D. Kapitonov, I. V. Kirilenko, A. P. Solomentsev, M. S. Katushev, K. P.	Ustinov, D. P. Kulakov, F. D. Kapitonov, I. V. Kirilenko, A. P. -Solomentsev, M. S. (11/1971) Katushev, K. P.	Ustinov, D. P. Kulakov, F. D. Kapitonov, I. V. Kirilenko, A. P. Katushev, K. P. Dolzhik, V. I.
-65) -65) 1/1965) /1966)				

Table III

Chairmen, 1st Deputy Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of USSR, Council of Ministers,  
1953 - 1972

<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>DEPUTY CHAIRMAN</u>
Mar. 6,53-Feb. 8,55	Kulikov, G.M.	Mar. 6,53-June 29,57 Molotov, V.M.
Feb. 8,55-Mar. 27,58	Bulgarin, N.A.	Mar. 6,53-June 29,57 Kaganovich, L.M.
Mar. 27,58-Oct. 15,64	Khrushchev, N.S.	Mar. 6,53-Feb. 8,55 Bulgarin, N.A.
Oct. 15,64-	Kosygin, A.	Mar. 6,52-Feb. 8,53 Borlya, I.P.
		Mar. 28,55-July 15,64 Nikuyan, A.I.
		Feb. 28,55-July 5,57 Saburov, N.Z.
		Feb. 28,55-Mar. 31,58 Pereslavl, M.G.
		May 3,57-Mar. 31,58 Kuz'min, I.I.
		Mar. 27,58-May 4,60 Kosygin, F.N.
		May 4,60-Oct. 15,64 Kosygin, A.N.
Mar. 13,63-Mar. 26,65	Ustinov, D.P.	Feb. 28,55-Dec. 31,56 Zavetnyagin, A.P.
Mar. 26,65-	Mazurov, K.T.	Mar. 31,58-1959 Kuz'min, I.I.
Oct. 2,65-1972	Polyanskiy, D.S.	Mar. 31,59-Nov. 9,62 Zasyad'ko, A.F.
		June 10,61-Oct. 15,64 Rudnev, K.N.
		May 4,60-Nov. 24,62 Novikov, V.N.
		Mar. 26,65-
		May 4,60-Dec. 26,62 Ignatov, N.G.
		July 17,62 Dynitskii, V.E.
		Nov. 23,62-Oct. 15,64 Polyanskiy, D.S.
		Nov. 23,62-Dec. 9,65 Shelepin, A.N.
		Nov. 23,62- Lesevko, N.A.
		Nov. 24,62- Novikov, I.I.
		Mar. 13,63- Smirnov, I.V.
		Nov. 10,62-Oct. 2,65 Lomko, P.F.
		Nov. 13,65-1972 Yefremov, M.T.
		Oct. 2,65- Babakov, N.K.
		Oct. 2,65- Kirillin, V.A.
		Oct. 2,65- Tikhonov, N.A.
		May 72- Shelest, P.Y.

SOURCES: *Officials of the Soviet Union*, the Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R., Munich, Germany, 1967.  
*Prominent personalities in the U.S.S.R.*, the Institute for the Study of the U.S.S.R., Munich, Germany, 1968.  
*Directory of Soviet Officials*, Vol I: National Organizations, CIA Reference Ald., June 1970, Nov. 1973.

\*still in office as of Nov. 1972. *Directory of Soviet Officials*, Vol I, National Organizations, CIA Reference Ald., Nov. 1973.

Table IV

## Chiefs of General Staff and Deputies, 1953-1972

Chiefs of Staff	First Deputy Chief of Staff	Deputy Chief of Staff
1952-1960 Sokolovskiy V.D.	1954-1962 Antonov A.I.	1952-1960 Malinin M.S.
1960-1963 Zakharov M.V.	1962-1965 Batov P.I.	1961-1964 Kurasov V.V.
1963-1964† Biryuzov S.S.	*1968- Oparkov N.V.	1965-1968 Batov P.I.
1964-1971 Zakharov M.V.	*1968- Shterenko S.M.	1964-1972 Chabanenko A.T.
*1971- Kulikov V.G.	1969-1972 Gerasimov A.V.	*1966- Ivashutin P.I.
		1966-1972 Povaliy M.I.
		1968-1969 Gerasimov A.V.
		*1970- Druzhinin V.V.
		*1970- Kozlov M.M.
		*1971- Volkov A.V.

SOURCES: 5000 Sowjetköpfe, Gliederung und Gesicht eines Führungskollektivs by Ilans Koch, Deutsche Industrieverlags-GmbH, Köln, FR, 1959.  
 Who's Who in the USSR, 1961/1962, 1965/1966, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany.  
 Prominent Personalities in the USSR, 1968, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany.  
 Directory of USSR Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, CIA Reference Aid, Sept. 1969, March 1970, November 1970, September 1972, April 1973.  
 Who Was Who in the USSR, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, 1972.

\* Still in office as of March 1973 according to Directory of USSR Min. of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, CIA Reference Aid, April 1973.

Table V

Commanders - in - Chief - Branches of the Armed Forces, 1953 - 1972

Ground Forces	Navy	Air Force	PVO	Strategic Rocket Forces
1950-1952 Unknown	1939-1947 Kuznetsov N.G.	1949-1957 Zhukov P.P.	1947-1955 Goryarov I.A.	1959-1960 Nedelin N.I.
1952-1955 Zhukov G.K.	1947-1951 Yumashev I.S.	1957-1969 Vozshilin K.A.	1955-1962 Biryuzov S.S.	1960-1962 Mostalenko K.S.
1955-1956 Konov I.S.	1951-1955 Kuznetsov N.G.	*1969- Kuzakov P.S.	1962-1966 Sudets V.A.	1962-1963 Biryuzov S.S.
1956-1957 Malinovskiy R.	*1956- Gorshkov S.G.	Lant. Ministr. Air	*1965- Battikov P.P.	1963-1972 Krylov N.I.
1957-1960 Grechko A.A.	1946-1952 Golovanov A.F.		*1972 Tolubko V.E.	
1960-1964 Chuykov V.I.	1954-? Aladimov V.I.			
*1967- Pavlovsky I.G.	1962-1969 Agaltsov F.A.			
	*1969- Reshetnikov V.V.			

SOURCES: Who's Who in the USSR, 1961/1962, 1965/1966, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany. Prominent Personalities in the USSR, 1968, compiled by the Institut für the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany. September Directory of USSR Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, CIA Reference Aid, September 1969, March 1970, November 1970, September 1972, April 1973.

\* Still in office as of March 1973 according to Directory of USSR Min. of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, April 1973, CIA Reference Aid.

Table VI  
Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Defense of the USSR, 1953-1972

Ministers	First Deputy Ministers	Deputy Ministers
Mar. 15, 1953-Feb. 8, 1955 Bulganin N.A.	1949-1953 Sokolovsky V.D.	1947-1953 Govorov L.A.
Feb. 9, 1955-Oct. 26, 1957 Zhukov G.K.	1955-1960 Sokolovsky V.D.	1952-1960 Nedelin M.I.
Oct. 26, 1957-Mar. 31, 1967 Malinovskiy R.Ya.	1953-1955 Zhukov G.K.	1953-1957 Zhigarev P.F.
*Apr. 12, 1967-Grechko A.A.	1953-1956 Kuznetsov N.G.	1955-1958 Neretkov K.A.
	1953-1957 Vasilevskiy A.M.	1955-1960 Belokoskov V.E.
	1955-1960 Konev I.S.	1955-1963 Biryuzov S.S.
	1956-1957 Malinovskiy R.Ya.	1956-1962 Rokossovsky K.K.
	1956-1962 Gorshkov S.G.	1956-1968 Bagramyan I.Kh.
	1957-1967 Grechko A.A.	*1952- Gorshkov S.G.
	1960-1964 Chuykov V.I.	1957-1968 Vershinin K.A.
	1963-1964 Biryuzov S.S.	1958-1960 Shebunin I.I.
	1960-1963 Zakharov M.V.	*1960- Noskalenko K.S.
*1967-Sokolov S.L.		1962-1966 Sudets V.A.
*1967-Yakubovskiy I.I.		1963-1972 Krylov N.I.
*1971-Kulikov V.G.		1964-1965 Penkovsky V.A.
		*1964- Komarovskiy A.N.
		*1966- Batitskiy P.F.
		*1967- Pavlovskiy I.G.
		1968-1972 Maryakhin S.P.
		*1969- Kutakhov P.S.
		*1970- Alekseyev N.N.
		*1972- Tolubko V.F.
		*1972- Altunin A.T.
		*1972- Kurkotkin S.K.

SOURCES: Directory of Soviet Officials, Vol. I, Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, August 1960.

Who's Who in the USSR, 1961/1962, 1965/1966, biographical directory of prominent personalities in the Soviet Union, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany.

Officials of the Soviet Union, 1917-1967, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany.

Directory of USSR Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, CIA, Reference Aid, September 1968, March 1970, November 1970, September 1972, April 1973.

Prominent Personalities in the USSR, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, 1968.

\*Still in office as of March 1973 according to Directory of USSR Min. of Defense and Armed Forces Officials, CIA Reference Aid, April 1973.

Deceased

SOURCES: Structure and Organization of Defense-Related Industries by Andrew Shcher, Economic Performance and the Military Burden in the Soviet Union. A compendium of papers submitted to the 23rd Congress, 23 session, 1970.  
Evolution of the Central Administrative Structure of the USSR 1917-June 1972-CIA Research Aid A72-14, August, 1972.  
Directory of Soviet Officials, Vol I: National Organizations, CIA Reference Aid, June 1970, November 1973.  
Prominent Personalities in the USSR, compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, 1963.  
Officials of the Soviet Union 1917-1967, published by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, Germany, 1967.

<sup>\*</sup> Still in office according to Directory of Soviet Officials, Vol. I: National Organizations, CII Reference Aid, November, 1922.